



Key Trends in Special Education in Charter Schools in 2015–2016:

Secondary Analysis
of the Civil Rights
Data Collection

November 2019

Lauren Morando Rhim, Shaini Kothari,
and Stephanie Lancet



NCSECS.ORG

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools



The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (the Center) is an independent, non-profit organization formed in 2013. The Center is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to charter schools and to fostering effective implementation of practices that will benefit students with disabilities in both charter and traditional public schools by proactively working with states, authorizers, charter school and special education advocates, as well as other stakeholders.

To increase our collective understanding of the challenges, identify viable solutions, and ensure effective charter school practices that justify the trust of families and students with disabilities, the charter sector needs a credible entity that will be a reliable resource for key stakeholders, both in the charter sector and the special education advocacy community. Our goal is to advocate for students with disabilities to ensure that if they are interested in attending charter schools, they are able to access and thrive in schools designed to enable all students to succeed.

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

Mission

To ensure that students with disabilities are able to fully access and thrive in charter schools.

Vision

The charter school sector will fully embrace its responsibilities to meet the needs of all students and serve as a model of innovative and exemplary programs for students with diverse learning needs.

To fulfill its mission and vision, the Center focuses on four key areas:

- Establish and Communicate Facts

- Inform Federal, State, and Local Policy

- Build Coalitions of Diverse Stakeholders

- Build Capacity for Charter Schools to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

© 2019 National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools. All Rights Reserved.

NCSECS.ORG

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

Key Trends in Special Education in Charter Schools in 2015–2016:

Secondary Analysis of the
Civil Rights Data Collection

November 2019

Lauren Morando Rhim, Shaini Kothari, and Stephanie Lancet

Acknowledgments

The secondary analysis required significant time on the part of our research team. Data analysis for this report was conducted by Center Data Specialist Shaini Kothari and Center Program Specialist Stephanie Lancet. The Center's Equity Coalition, comprised of representatives from the special education and charter school advocacy communities, contributed to the development of the research questions that guided the analyses. We would like to acknowledge Candace Cortiella, Kelly Henderson, Megan Ohlssen, Paul O'Neill, Sivan Tuchman, and Wendy Tucker for their thorough and thoughtful reviews of the report. We would also like to acknowledge our board members, who provided guidance regarding the research questions. In addition, we would like to thank Puritan Capital who led the design and production work. And finally, we would like to acknowledge the Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education for their ongoing commitment to and investment in the Civil Rights Data Collection. While we appreciate their respective contributions to the work, we are responsible for any and all errors or omissions.

Preface

This report builds on our 2015 and 2018 analyses of the prior Civil Rights Data Collections, representing a key element of our effort to **establish and communicate the facts** about educating students with disabilities in charter schools. The 2018 report expanded upon the baseline of data regarding the extent to which and how charter schools educate students with disabilities. This, the third of such analyses, similarly examines the status of students with disabilities in charter schools compared to traditional public schools according to enrollment, service provision, and discipline as well as documents the prevalence and focus of specialized charter schools. In conducting the respective analyses, our goal is to provide key stakeholders such as federal and state policy makers, practitioners, and researchers with a solid foundation of accessible data to foster a more productive examination of the issues and catalyze changes that could substantially benefit students with disabilities.

Similar to the prior two editions, this report reflects our deep commitment to using data to inform both policy and practice to ensure equity for all students with disabilities in the growing charter sector.



Lauren Morando Rhim, PhD
Executive Director and Co-Founder
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools



Contents

Executive Summary	2	Implications and Discussion	25
Introduction	4	Introduction	25
The Civil Rights Data Collection	6	Implications of Key Findings	25
Enrollment	7	Parents, Choice, and Access to Quality Charter Schools	25
Enrollment Variances	9	LEA Status	26
Enrollment Variance by State	9	Placement and Related Factors	26
Enrollment Variance within States	12	Services, Enrollment, and Funding	26
Enrollment Variance by Charter School Legal Status	12	Specialized Charter Schools	26
Enrollment Variance by Disability Category	13	Conclusion	27
Enrollment Variance by Gender	15	Recommendations	28
Enrollment Variance by Race	15	Federal Level	28
Educational Placement	18	State Level	28
Discipline	20	Local/Authorizer Level	29
Suspensions	20	School Level	29
Expulsions	21	Stakeholder Level (e.g., Advocates and Funders)	29
Specialized Charter Schools	23	Appendices	31
Enrollment by Disability Type at Specialized Charter Schools	24	Appendix A: Detailed Methodology	31
Specialized Charter School Locations by State	24	Appendix B: References	57
		Appendix C: 2015–2016 List of Specialized Charter Schools	59

Executive Summary



The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (the Center) is deeply committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to charter schools and that charter schools are designed and operated to enable success for all students. To accomplish this goal, we conduct analyses and release a comprehensive report of the bi-annual U.S. Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which is released by The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. This is the Center's third edition, and in addition to examining some of the key indicators we studied in the two prior reports (e.g., enrollment, educational placement, and discipline), we've introduced more detailed analyses such as enrollment variance by gender and race and the impact of a charter's legal status on enrollment and educational environment (i.e., placement).

In this third report, we found that while the charter sector is making progress, not surprisingly, there is more work to do. In large part, the most recent data confirm previous findings and further establish a clear trend line regarding the extent to which students with disabilities are represented in both traditional public and charter schools. *Below are key takeaways; we encourage readers to review the full report for further data points, details, and nuances.*

- **A growing proportion of students—across both the traditional and charter public school sectors—are being identified as having a disability, and families continue to be interested in enrolling in charter schools.** While charter schools continue to enroll proportionally fewer students with disabilities (10.79%) as compared to traditional public schools in comparable states (12.84%), the difference in enrollment of students with disabilities between the two sectors has decreased overall since 2008.
- **Enrollment data by gender and race (new to the The Center's CRDC report series) confirm broadly observed trends. In general, across both traditional public and charter schools, male students and Black students are disproportionately identified as having a disability.** There are twice as many male students with disabilities as female students with disabilities in both charter schools (66.48% v 33.52%) and traditional public schools (64.73% v. 35.27%), with more variance by state in the charter sector. Black students are disproportionately identified as having a disability by approximately 4% in both charter schools and traditional public schools.
- **Charter schools report a higher percentage of enrollment of students with autism and emotional disturbance,** disability profiles that frequently require more significant supports and services.
- **Disciplinary actions such as suspension and expulsion continue to be a significant issue for students with disabilities across all public schools. They lose instructional time at much higher rates relative to their peers without disabilities.** All charter schools—regardless of legal status—suspend a larger percentage of students with disabilities (approximately twice as many) compared to their peers without disabilities. This doubling is consistent with traditional public schools, though suspensions in charter schools continue to occur at a higher rate; especially when virtual charter schools are removed from the analysis.

- A charter school's status as a local education agency (LEA) (i.e., a school district), or conversely as part of an LEA, appears to influence the experiences of students with disabilities. In general, when compared to charter schools that are part of an LEA, **charter schools that operate as their own LEA report statistically significant differences for students with disabilities.** Charter schools that are their own LEA enroll a larger proportion of students with disabilities (11.28% vs. 10.17%), report a larger percentage of students with disabilities spending 80% or more of their time in the general education classroom (85.35% vs. 80.31%), and both suspend and expel students with and without disabilities at higher rates.
- **The popularity of specialized charter schools continues to grow, with the identification of 28 additional schools designed primarily to educate students with disabilities.** While recognizing the importance of providing unique programs and approaches, continued authorization and growth of specialized charter schools requires care given the potential unintended consequences, which could include: limiting choices for students, driving students into unnecessarily restrictive settings separate from their peers without disabilities, and decreasing accountability and expectations.

In conducting this analysis, our goal is to provide policy leaders as well as practitioners and researchers with a solid foundation of information for a more productive examination of the issues, in an effort to drive effective change—in both policy and practice—that could discernibly benefit students with disabilities. Federal, state, and local policy makers and advocates have used the data to inform their discussions and decision-making, as have other key stakeholders (e.g., the National Council on Disability in its comprehensive report on charter schools and students with disabilities in 2018, and the Center's Equity Coalition in its discussions related to charter legal status and school discipline).

As charter schools struggle to sustain support and grow enrollment in an increasingly divisive political climate, ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities in charter schools is critical to their very legitimacy. Key stakeholders must continue to collaborate to address the various systemic challenges that impact charter schools' ability to meet students' individual needs, maintain high standards, and cultivate innovation (e.g., difficulty building and sustaining capacity to provide quality accommodations, modifications, services, and supports that enable students with a diverse array of disabilities to succeed). The findings and analyses from the 2015–2016 CRDC highlight the importance of continuing to conduct and prioritize both quantitative and qualitative research—particularly related to enrollment of and education of students with disabilities—so that data may be leveraged to inform decision-making at all levels.

Introduction



As we approach the 30-year mark of the growth and evolution of the charter sector, the degree to which charter schools enroll and educate students with disabilities continues to be an area of concern, especially as the political climate shifts and charter schools are being increasingly scrutinized. Families, advocates, school leaders, policy makers, and philanthropists continue to strive to ensure that charter schools not only welcome students with disabilities but also have the requisite expertise to provide them access to a free appropriate public education as guaranteed by federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)¹ and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.²

To continue to track the emerging trends in both charter and traditional public schools, the Center followed up its examinations of the 2011–2012 and 2013–2014 public releases of the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) by the U.S. Department of Education (USED). The 2015–2016 CRDC included 85,864 public schools from across the nation of which 5,548 were charter schools (see **Table 1** for the population of schools included in the CRDC and Appendix A for more information on the CRDC). The survey collected responses from 99.8% of the school districts in the nation (**Table 2**) (U.S. Department of Education, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015–2016 Data Notes*). The CRDC provides the field with data regarding key variables of interest (e.g., enrollment, educational placement, and discipline rates). For details regarding the methodology behind the analysis, see Appendix A. For the references, see Appendix B.

Table 1. Overview of Schools in the 2015–2016 CRDC

School type	Number of schools, by type	Percent of schools, by type
Traditional Public Schools	80,316	93.54%
Charter	5,548	6.46%
Alternative	1,276	1.49%
Magnet	3,379	3.94%
Special Education	1,569	1.83%
Total*	85,864	107.25%

* Total number of schools and total percent of schools by type is greater than the number of schools in the CRDC because school types are not mutually exclusive (i.e., alternative schools may also be counted as traditional public schools).

¹ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that gives children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education as well as special education and related services.

² Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities, public or private, that receive federal financial assistance.

Table 2: Snapshot Comparisons 2011–2012, 2013–2014, and 2015–2016

	Traditional Public Schools			Charter Schools					
Data point	2011–2012	2013–2014	2015–2016	2011–2012		2013–2014		2015–2016	
Number of schools included in analysis	81,881	80,120	80,315	4,198		4,871		5,548	
Percentage of schools Included in analysis ¹	90.60%	89.64%	89.70%	79.20%		79.60%		81.32%	
Percentage of schools by LEA status	Part of LEA	Part of LEA	Part of LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA
	100%	100%	100%	N/A ²	N/A	46.25%	53.75%	43.02%	56.98%
Number of specialized charter schools	N/A ³	N/A	N/A	115		137		165	
						Part of LEA	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA
Enrollment of students with disabilities (K–12)	12.55%	12.46%	12.84%	10.42%	10.62%		10.79%		
					9.74%	11.50%	10.17%	11.28%	
Placement of students with disabilities in general education >80% of the day	66.85%	68.09%	65.53%	84%	84.27% ⁴		83.50%		
							80.31%	85.35%	
Suspension of students with disabilities (one or more out-of-school suspensions)	13.40%	11.56%	11.32%	13.45%	12.28%		11.85%		
					10.08%	14.11%	9.61%	13.43%	
Expulsion of students with disabilities (with or without services)	0.46%	0.51%	0.47%	0.46%	0.39%		0.28%		
					0.20%	0.54% i	0.20%	0.35%	

¹ While the survey collected data from 99.8% of the districts in the nation, individual schools included in our analysis are lower due to incomplete surveys or privacy restrictions.

² We did not separate this analysis by LEA status in 2011–2012.

³ The focus was specialization in charter schools, not in traditional public schools.

⁴ We did not separate this analysis by LEA status in 2013–2014.

The Civil Rights Data Collection



The CRDC is a national data set compiled by the USED's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). As described by the USED, the purpose of the CRDC (formerly the Elementary and Secondary School Survey) is:

- to collect data on leading civil rights indicators related to access and barriers to educational opportunity at the early childhood through grade 12 levels;
- to ensure that recipients of the Department's federal financial assistance do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and disability;
- to help with investigation of complaints alleging discrimination, determine whether the Federal civil rights laws it enforces have been violated, initiate proactive compliance reviews to focus on particularly acute or nationwide civil rights compliance problems, and provide policy guidance and technical assistance to educational institutions, parents, students, and others; and
- to serve as a valuable resource for other Department offices and Federal agencies, policymakers and researchers, educators and school officials, parents and students, and the public who seek data on student equity and opportunity (U.S. Department of Education, About the CRDC).

The CRDC survey is administered every other school year and collects data from the universe of public schools in the U.S. rather than a sample of schools. Released to the public in the spring of 2018, the 2015–2016 CRDC provides the most recent and most comprehensive data set³ regarding civil rights in the the U.S. public education system.



³ The USED releases some data publicly, but restricts access to the full dataset due to privacy protections.

Enrollment



The proportion of students with disabilities (i.e., students identified as having a disability that qualifies them to receive special education and related services) has increased in both charter and traditional public schools. This increase has occurred while states and districts have been encouraged by the USED to implement strategies such as response to intervention (RTI) and other multi-tiered intervention strategies which focus on providing increasingly intensive support within general education,⁴ with the goal of providing students with the skills they need to be successful as early as possible, potentially avoiding the need to be formally identified to receive special education services. The enrollment increases documented in the most recent CRDC reflect trends confirmed in other national level data collection efforts⁵ (**Figure 1**).

In 2015–2016, charter schools continued to enroll proportionally fewer students with disabilities⁶ than traditional public schools on average (**Figure 1**).⁷ On average, 10.79% of students in charter schools have disabilities (n = 293,744), compared to 12.84% of students in traditional public schools (n = 5,981,559). Students who qualify for Section 504 support made up 2.31% of all students in traditional public schools and 2.19% of all students in charter schools. This is slightly higher than seen in 2013–14.⁸

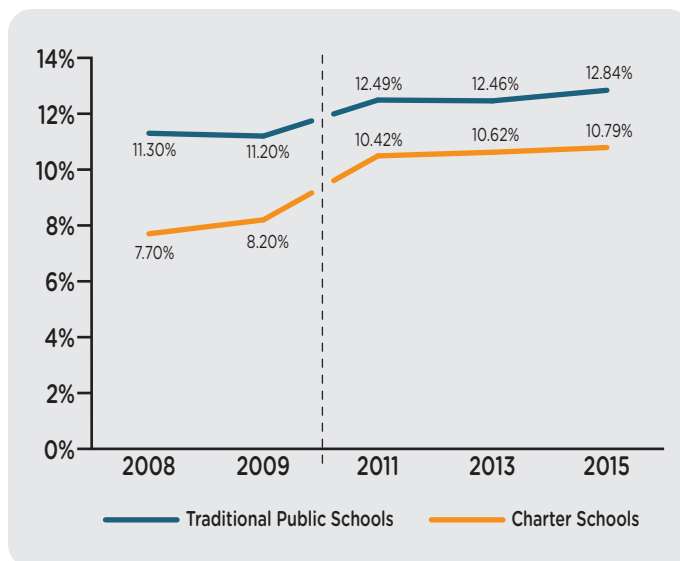


Figure 1. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in Traditional Public vs. Charter Schools in 2015–16⁹

⁴ The IDEA and consequently the CRDC refer to the general education classroom as the “regular” education. However, in line with current practice, we will use the term “general” in lieu of “regular” given the normative implications of the term “regular.”

⁵ A report from the Institute of Education Sciences’ (IES) National Center for Education Statistics, “The Condition of Education: Children and Youth with Disabilities,” supports the observed trend that the percentage of students with disabilities is increasing overall. The percentage point varies because IES data is not collected from the CRDC survey (2019).

⁶ Unless noted, all data referencing students with disabilities includes only those students eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

⁷ Inter-state data analysis conducted only for states that have charter school laws.

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all sources for presented figures are the 2015–2016 CRDC core data set. See Appendix A for a detailed methodology and significance testing.

⁹ Notably, data from 2008–2010 and from 2011–2015 are from different sources. Data from 2008–2010 comes from the Government Accountability Office (2012), which was provided a custom data file by USED with extracted data elements from the large-scale EDFacts data system reported by SEAs through Education’s Data Exchange Network (EDEN) Submission System. Data from 2011–2015 comes from the CRDC core data set unless otherwise noted. See Appendix A for a detailed methodology. Different data collection methods do generate different totals, but the difference between the two sectors over time is the focus for this figure.

The increase in the proportion of students with disabilities enrolled in traditional public schools exceeded the increase in charter schools. Consequently, the difference in enrollment rates between the two sectors has increased rather than decreased, going from 1.84% in 2013-2014 to 2.05% in 2015-2016 (**Figure 2**). The difference in enrollment rates has decreased on average, however, from 3.6% in 2008-2009 to 2.05% in 2015-2016. Given that the CRDC reflects nearly the universe of both types of schools, any difference would be considered statistically significant and supports concerns that charter schools are not enrolling students with disabilities as readily as traditional public schools.

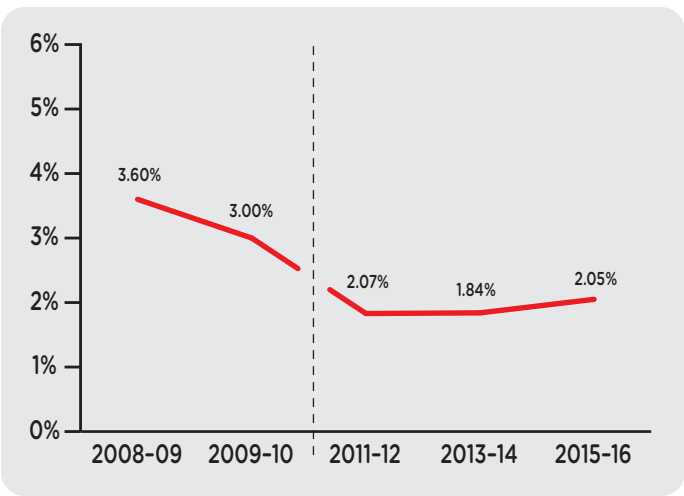


Figure 2. Difference in Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in Traditional Public vs. Charter Schools in 2015-16¹⁰

¹⁰ As noted, data from 2008-2010 and from 2011-2015 are from different sources. Different data collection methods do generate different totals, but the difference between traditional public schools and charter schools is the focus for this figure.

Enrollment Variances



The national enrollment averages represent an important data point given the persistent narrative questioning the extent to which charter schools are serving all students. However, masked in these data points are notable overall enrollment variances, such as those between and even within states in both traditional public and charter schools.

IDEA requires states to have policies and procedures—known as Child Find—to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the state who are eligible to receive special education services are identified, located, and evaluated. Local educational agencies (LEAs) (i.e., districts) are responsible for completing the multiple steps of Child Find, culminating in the convening of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team charged with developing an appropriate set of goals and the special education and related services necessary to achieve those goals. While the CRDC data do not provide us with insight regarding the causes of the variance, our findings reflect the broader literature base that documents the significant variability between states. The following sections outline findings related to variance between and within states and according to legal status, disability type, gender, and race.

Enrollment Variance by State

While Child Find is dictated by the IDEA and related state policies, it provides states “some latitude in setting eligibility criteria and defining disability categories” and additionally allows them to “determine their own processes for identifying and evaluating children” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2019). As a result, a child eligible for special education and related services in one state might be ineligible in another, which contributes to differences in the total percentages of children receiving special education services across states. Furthermore, among children who are identified as eligible to receive special education services, there are variances between

states and even LEAs in specific categories (e.g., a child identified as having other health impairment in one state might be identified as having multiple disabilities in another state). In practice, there are a multitude of factors that are hypothesized to contribute to differences in identification and enrollment in both charter and traditional public schools, including policy and funding incentives, accountability systems, and referral biases (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). Within this broader context, we see variance in the percentage of students with disabilities between states.

- Schools in Iowa enrolled students with disabilities at the highest rate in charter schools (20.49%), whereas schools in Massachusetts enrolled students with disabilities at the highest rate in traditional public schools (17.33%).¹¹
- Schools in Colorado, Texas, Idaho, and Hawaii enrolled students with disabilities at the lowest rates in both charter and traditional public schools (**Figure 3**). Schools in Colorado enrolled students with disabilities at the lowest rate in charter schools (6.19%),¹² whereas schools in Texas¹³ enrolled students with disabilities at the lowest rate in traditional public schools (8.84%).
- Schools in Maine and Louisiana enrolled students who qualify for Section 504 at the highest rate in charter schools (9.49% and 8.75%), whereas schools in New Hampshire and Texas enrolled students who qualify for Section 504 at the highest rate in traditional public schools (5.96% and 5.09%).
- Schools in Wisconsin and Oklahoma enrolled students

¹¹ Any inter-state analyses of the charter sector excludes states without charter laws.

¹² AL and KY are not represented, as their charter school laws were passed in 2015 and 2017 respectively. MT, ND, NE, SD, VT, and WV are not represented, as they only had traditional public schools. Please see table B5 in Appendix A for corresponding percentages for each state, along with the differences in percentages by state.

¹³ The extremely low percentage of enrollment of students with disabilities in Texas can be attributed to the state guidance that effectively limited enrollment under IDEA in all schools in Texas to 8.5% (Rosenthal 2016), a practice that has been discontinued per federal mandate.

who qualify for Section 504 at the lowest rate in charter schools (0.59% and 0.86%), whereas schools in Mississippi and Wisconsin enrolled students who

qualify for Section 504 at the lowest rate in traditional public schools (0.40% and 0.84%).

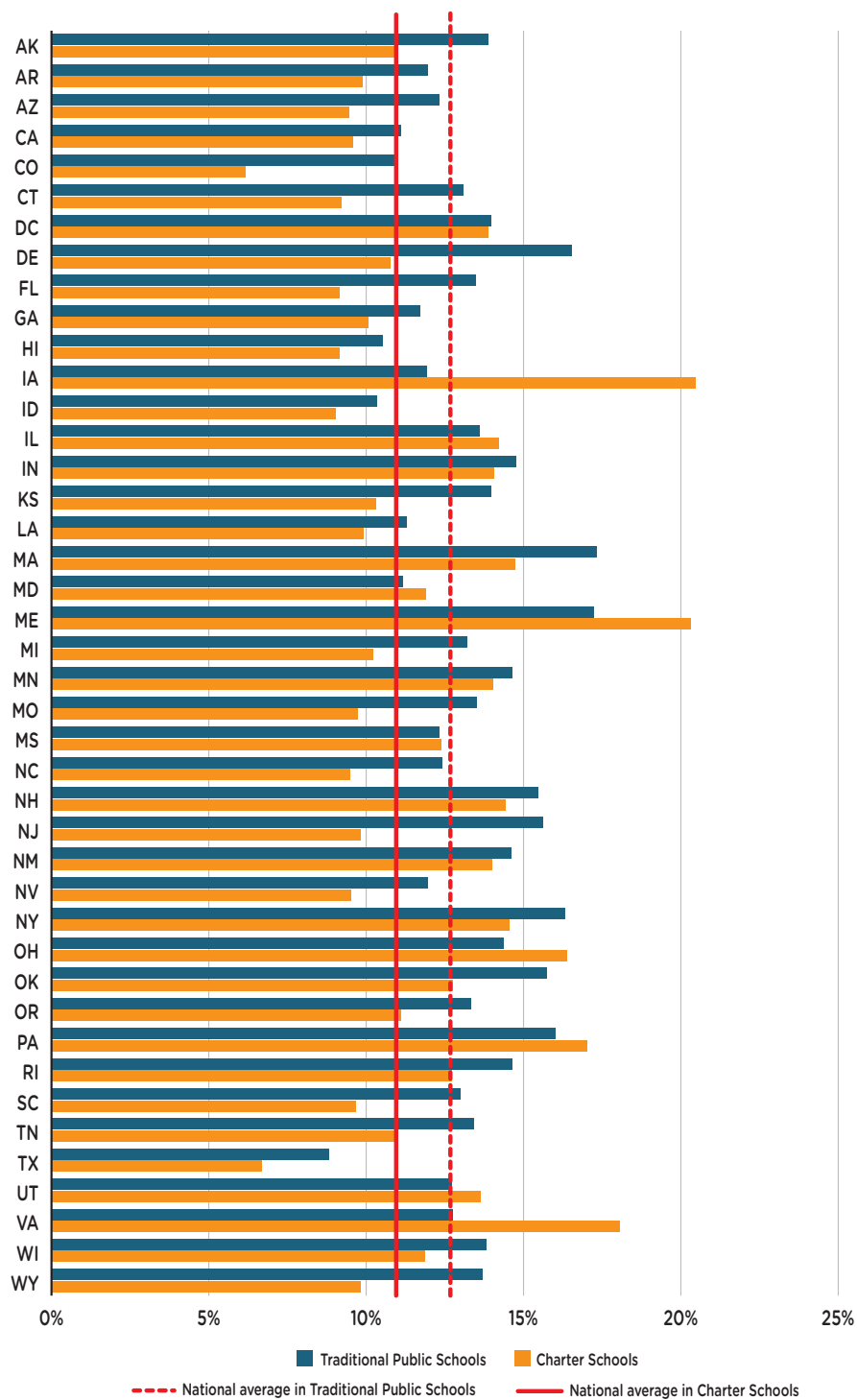


Figure 3. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in Traditional Public vs. Charter Schools by State¹⁴

¹⁴ The notable differences between traditional public schools and charter schools in states like Iowa, Maine, and Virginia and are outliers due in large part to a small sample of charter schools (n = 2, 5, and 7 respectively) and a disproportionate percentage of students with disabilities in these schools.

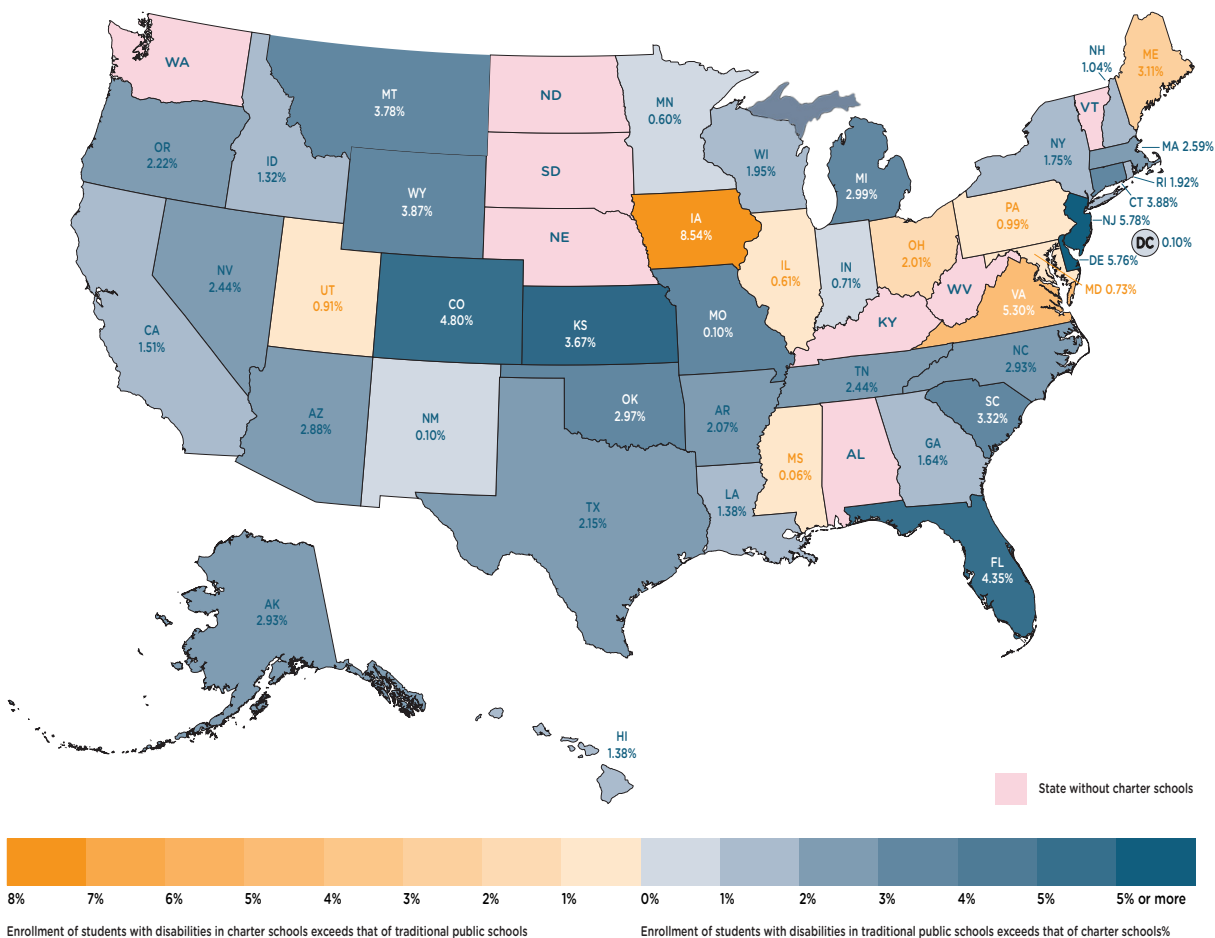


Figure 4. Difference in Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015–2016 by State

While most charter schools in most states enroll a smaller proportion of students with disabilities when compared to traditional public schools, the proportion of students with disabilities in 2015–2016 was greater in charter schools than traditional public schools in nine states: Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Virginia.¹⁵ States joining this group since 2013–2014 include Illinois, Mississippi, and Utah. Conversely, Minnesota and New Hampshire shifted from enrolling more students with disabilities in charter schools in 2013–2014 to fewer students with disabilities in 2015–2016.

¹⁵ The notable differences between traditional public schools and charter schools in the states like Iowa, Virginia, and Maine are outliers due in large part to a notably small sample of charter schools ($n = 2, 5$, and 7 respectively) and a disproportionate percentage of students with disabilities in these schools.

- 22 states with charter laws report higher-than-average enrollment of students with disabilities under IDEA in charter schools, whereas 20 states report below average enrollment of students with disabilities under IDEA in charter schools.
- 32 states report higher-than-average enrollment of students with disabilities under IDEA in traditional public schools, whereas 19 states report below average enrollment of students with disabilities under IDEA in traditional public schools.
- 17 states with charter laws report higher-than-average enrollment of students with disabilities under Section 504 in charter schools, whereas 25 states report below average enrollment of students with disabilities under IDEA in charter schools.

- 16 states report higher-than-average enrollment of students with disabilities under Section 504 in traditional public schools, whereas 35 states report below average enrollment of students with disabilities under Section 504 in traditional public schools.¹⁶

Enrollment Variance within States

The statewide average enrollment of students with disabilities masks notable variances within individual states across both sectors. In practice, larger school districts typically develop specialized programs within their schools (e.g., “center-based programs”) or wholly separate schools for students who require more significant support; consequently, schools that operate these programs may have a larger proportion of students with disabilities. Conversely, other schools may have a smaller proportion or enroll students with a less diverse range of disabilities (US Department of Education, 2018). For additional details related to within-state variance, see Appendix A. In general, charter schools show greater variance in enrollment percentages of students with disabilities compared to traditional public schools.

Enrollment Variance by Charter School Legal Status

State charter laws determine whether charter schools are their own LEA, part of an LEA, or a hybrid wherein they are their own LEA for some programs (e.g., Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) but part of an LEA for other programs (e.g., IDEA)). Charter schools that operate as LEAs are wholly responsible for providing a full continuum of education placements for students with disabilities; charter schools that operate as part of an LEA share the responsibility for provision of special education and related services with the LEA (National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools, 2017). In practice, when charter schools operate as part of an LEA, the LEA typically retains some state and federal funds and influences the charter school’s special education policies and practices to varying degrees. For instance, the LEA may participate in IEP team meetings and play a role in determining placements or staffing allocations (Morando Rhim and O’Neill, 2013).

Charter schools that operate as their own LEA, (and are thus wholly responsible for provision of special education

and related services), tend to enroll more students with disabilities than their peers that operate as part of an LEA. In practice, traditional LEAs that have charter schools under their governance umbrella may be directing some students with disabilities, most notably students who require more significant supports, to existing LEA programs rather than creating or allocating resources to create programs in new charter schools.

- 56.98% of the charter schools in the nation operate as autonomous LEAs, while 43.02% operate as part of an LEA (**Figure A3** in Appendix A).¹⁷
- In general, charter schools that are their own LEA enroll a larger proportion of students with disabilities (11.28%) compared to charter schools that are part of an LEA (10.17%). However, this number is still lower than overall enrollment of students with disabilities in traditional public schools (12.84%) (**Figure 5**).

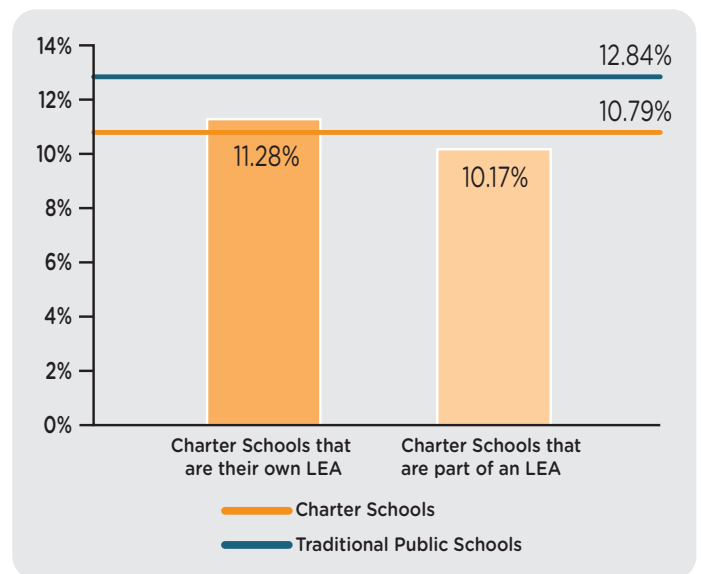


Figure 5. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 by Charter Legal Status¹⁸

¹⁷ Legal status varies between and within states and even charter school authorizers. In some states, charter schools may be an LEA for some purposes (e.g., receipt of funds under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act) but not others (e.g. receipt of funds under Part B of IDEA). Based on variables available from the 2013-2014 Common Core of Data (CCD) Local Education Agency Universe file, we were able to identify the legal status of 5,067 of the 5,548 charter schools in our larger sample. In instances where charter schools may be hybrid—in that they are LEAs for some purposes but not others—we deferred to how CCD categorized them.

¹⁸ Sources for presented figures with data representation by charter legal status (i.e., LEA) include the 2015-2016 CRDC core data set and National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data.

¹⁶ See **Table B8** in Appendix A.

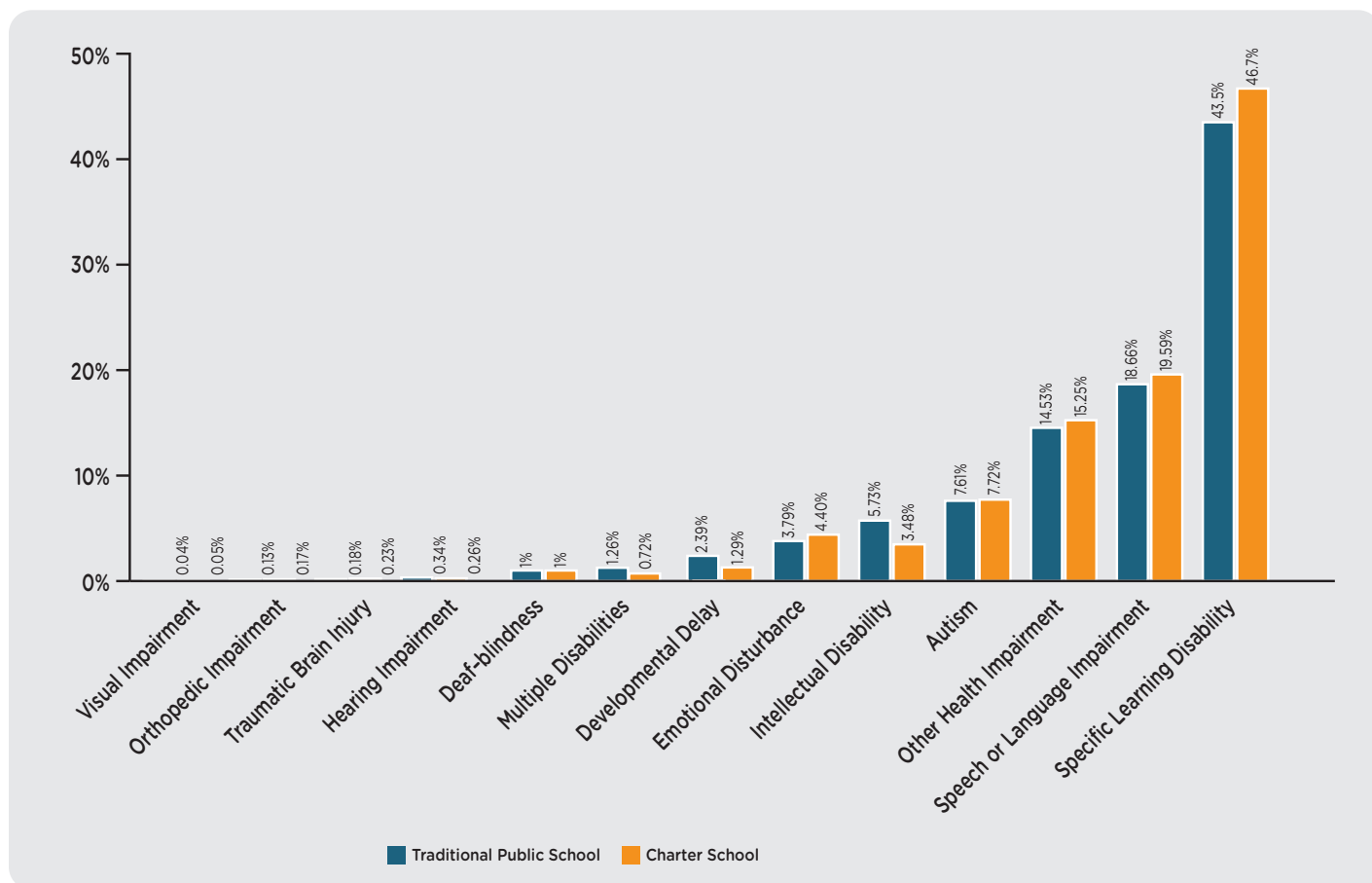


Figure 6. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 by Type of Disability

Enrollment Variance by Disability Category

Related to but distinct from understanding the extent to which students with disabilities are accessing charter schools is understanding the extent to which schools are enrolling students with a diverse range of disabilities. Analyzing enrollment variance by disability category creates an opportunity to identify 1) who charter schools are attracting and 2) the range of supports they provide. Furthermore, while relatively imprecise, disability categories¹⁹ can provide some insight into the levels of support students require. For instance, students with specific learning disability or speech or language impairment are the most prevalent and generally require the fewest supports and services, while students with autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities generally, but not always, require more significant supports and services. However, in line with the personalized nature of special education, decisions related

to services, accommodations, and modifications outlined in a student's IEP are highly individualized and therefore, variable.

- Compared to traditional public schools, charter schools report a higher percentage of enrollment of students with specific learning disability (the largest population of students with disabilities) (47.79% v. 43.98%), autism (8.08% v. 7.71%), and emotional disturbance (4.72% v. 3.89%) (**Figure 6**).
- Conversely, charter schools serve fewer students with developmental delay²⁰ (1.15% v. 2.33%), multiple disabilities (3.33% v. 5.86%), and intellectual disability (0.70% v. 1.15%).

¹⁹ The 13 categories of disability according to IDEA are: autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairments (including deafness), intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairments (including blindness).

²⁰ Under IDEA, decisions regarding whether and for what ages of students to use "developmental delays" are made at the discretion of the state, thus the difference may not be an accurate representation.

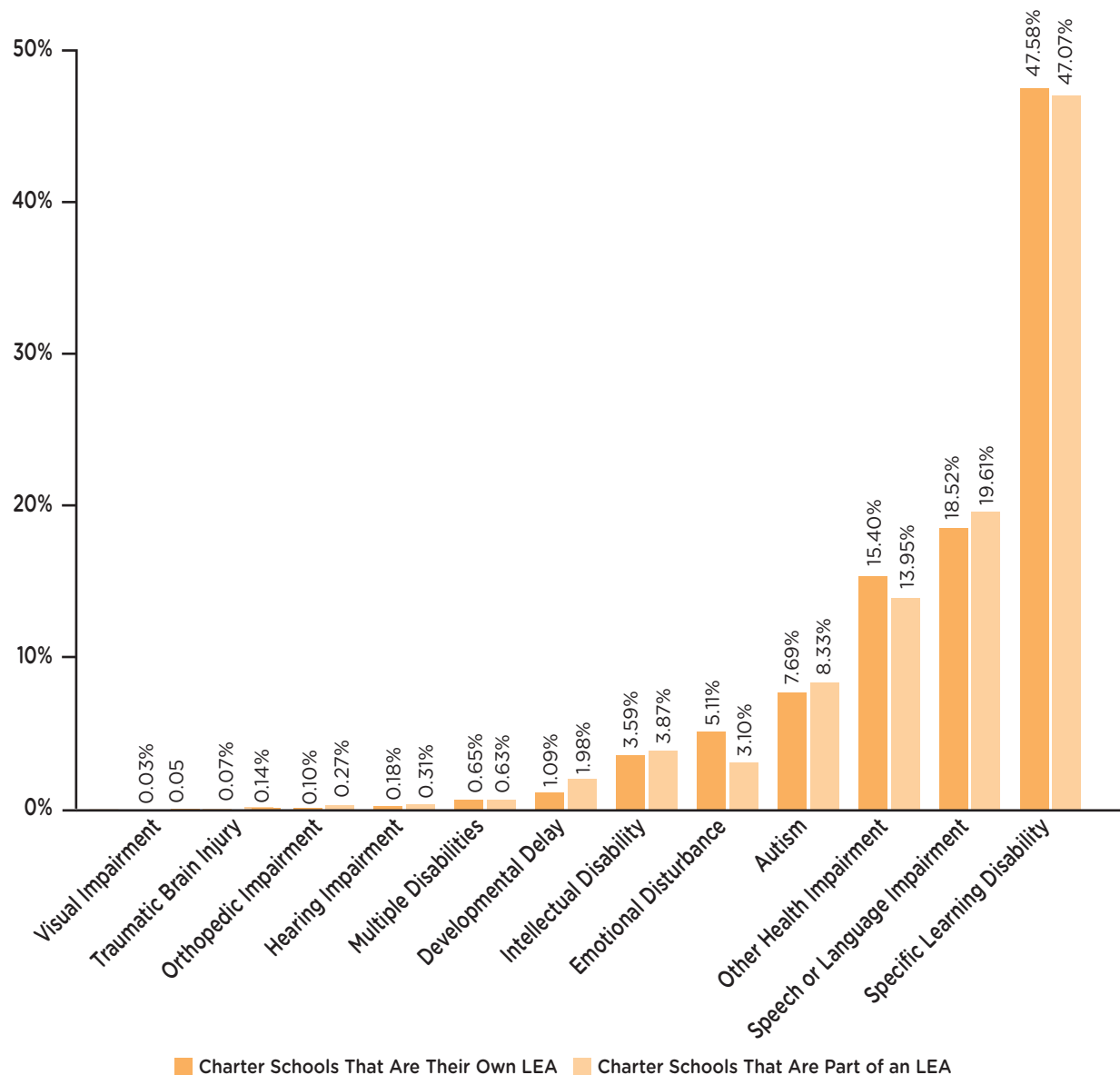


Figure 7. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 by Type of Disability and Charter Legal Status

- Charter schools and traditional public schools serve roughly the same proportion of students who have speech or language impairment, other health impairment, and other types of disabilities (e.g., orthopedic impairment, hearing or visual impairment, and traumatic brain injury).
- Within charter schools, those that are part of an LEA enroll a larger percentage of students with speech or language impairment and autism as compared to charter schools that are their own LEA.
- Within charter schools, those that are their own LEA enroll a larger percentage of students with emotional disturbance and other health impairment as compared to charter schools that are part of an LEA (**Figure 7**).

Enrollment Variance by Gender

Considering the extent to which students with disabilities access charter schools requires a deeper understanding of enrollment variances beyond those rooted in systems and structures like those discussed in prior sections (e.g., state eligibility criteria). It also requires an acknowledgment of how identity intersects with access. The data in this report affirms patterns already reflected in research regarding how gender relates to special education identification (Sullivan and Bal 2013):²¹ in general, male²² students are identified twice as often as female students as eligible for special education in both charter schools and traditional public schools (**Figure 8**). These results underscore the importance of grappling with intersectionality in states' policies and practices (e.g., intervention, referral, evaluation, and discipline) (see **Figure A1** and **A2** in Appendix A) that determine how students with disabilities access the charter sector.

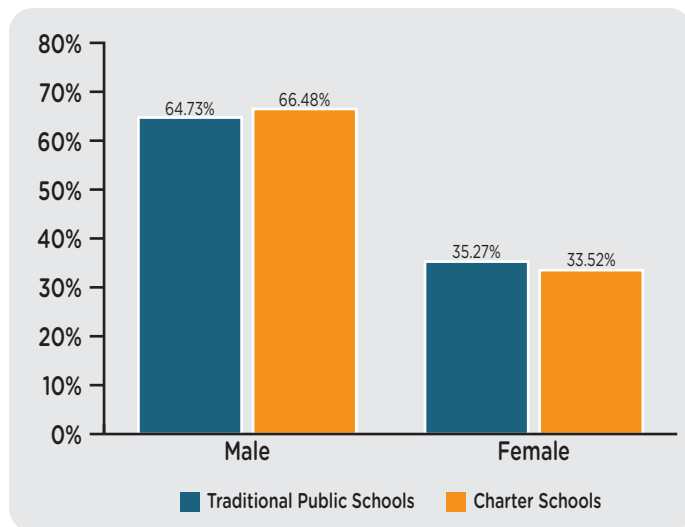


Figure 8. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 by Gender

- There are twice as many male students with disabilities than female students with disabilities in both charter schools (66.48% v. 33.52%) and traditional public schools (64.73% v. 35.27%).

²¹ Three theories have historically dominated attempts to explain gender differences in special education enrollment: “biological differences between females and males, behavioral differences between females and males, and bias in special education referral and assessment procedures” (Wehmeyer and Schwartz 2001). The research remains relatively limited with no consensus about the cause of gender differences, and whether males are over-represented, females are underrepresented, or if some gender differences are appropriate.

²² The CRDC survey collects data on gender according to the binary categories of male and female.

- In Virginia, Wyoming, and Mississippi, charter schools show the greatest disproportionality of enrollment of students with disabilities by gender (71.43% male v. 28.57% female),²³ whereas charter schools in Kansas show the least disproportionality of enrollment of students with disabilities by gender (55.83% male v. 44.17% female).
- Traditional public schools in Hawaii (69.48% male v. 30.52% female) and Maryland (67.98% male v. 32.02% female) show the greatest disproportionality in enrollment of students with disabilities by gender, whereas traditional public schools in Vermont (63.88% male v. 36.12% female) and Oklahoma (64.26% male v. 35.74% female) show the least disproportionality in enrollment of students with disabilities by gender.

Enrollment Variance by Race

Enrollment of students with disabilities also varies by race, with the extent of disproportionality in identification currently the focus of considerable discussion and analysis. Research has documented that Black students are overrepresented in special education. While identification as eligible for special education can lead to students receiving critical supports, inappropriate identification can lead to lowered expectations and limited access to the general education curriculum and teachers with content expertise. Conversely, research has also documented apparent under-representation of Black students as eligible for special education when family income and student achievement are held constant (Gordon, 2017), thereby potentially limiting their access to supports that could enable them to succeed. Whether the intersection of race and disability is leading to students being over- or conversely under-identified or perhaps both, it is critical that we examine the trends to ensure Black children are not denied access to rigorous instruction and curricula and related accommodations and modifications if needed (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). While research has not documented as many concerns related to identification of Hispanic students, the CRDC data indicate they are slightly under-represented in both sectors, raising concerns about the extent to which they may or may not be receiving all of the accommodations and modifications they may need to be successful.

²³ The enrollment percentages of students with disabilities by gender are coincidentally the same for Virginia, Wyoming, and Mississippi—Virginia has seven charter schools with 130 male students and 52 female students. Wyoming has three charter schools with 30 males and 12 females. Mississippi has two charter schools with 20 males and 8 females.

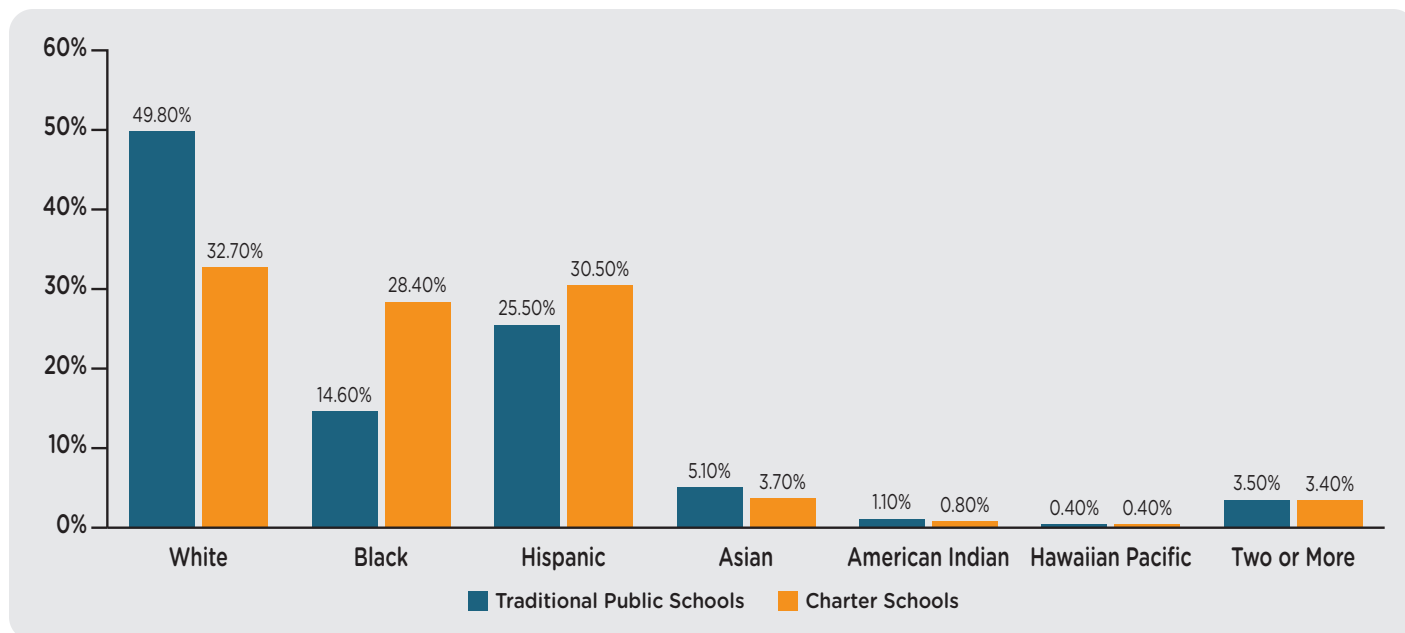


Figure 9A. Enrollment of Students in Charter and Traditional Public Schools in 2015-2016, by Race

Disproportionality in identification and placement and the intersection of race and disability continue to be ongoing policy issues. Per the 2016 *Equity in IDEA* regulations,²⁴ all states must track and identify districts where students of color are disproportionately identified as eligible for special education and related services relative to their White peers.

- Reflecting the fact that charter schools disproportionately operate in urban areas with more diverse populations, charter schools enroll a notably greater proportion of Black and Hispanic²⁵ students (28.40% and 30.50%, respectively) compared to traditional public schools (14.60% and 25.50%, respectively); conversely traditional public schools enroll a greater proportion of White and Asian students (49.80% and 5.10%, respectively) compared to charter schools (32.7% and 3.70%, respectively) (**Figure 9A**).
- When comparing the proportion of White students with

disabilities and Black students with disabilities, both charter and traditional public schools identify a roughly proportionate percentage of White students (i.e., 42% of the students with disabilities are White as compared to 40.8% of the total school population in charter schools and 45.3% students with disabilities are White as compared to 46.1% of the total population in traditional public schools) (**Figures 9B and 9C**).

- Conversely, both charter and traditional public schools identify a disproportionately greater percentage of Black students as having a disability (i.e., 28.4% of the students with disabilities are Black as compared to 24.8% of the total school population in charter schools and 23.2% of the students with disabilities are Black as compared to 19% of the total school population in traditional public schools).
- When comparing the proportion of White students with disabilities and Hispanic students with disabilities, both charter and traditional public schools identify a roughly proportionate percentage of White students (i.e., 44.49%²⁶ of the students with disabilities are White as compared to 43.68% of the total school population in charter schools and 47.35% students with disabilities are White as compared to 47.69% of the total population in traditional public schools) (**Figures 9D and 9E**).

²⁴ In 2013, the United States Government Accountability Office released a report—"Special Education—Standards Needed to Improve Identification of Racial and Ethnic Overrepresentation in Special Education"—which highlighted "considerable variability in states' implementation of the provisions in IDEA to address disproportionality." In response, the Obama administration issued the "Equity in IDEA" regulations in 2016, requiring states to track and identify districts with significant disproportionality (i.e., where students of color are disproportionately identified for special education by educational setting and disability category and/or are disproportionately disciplined relative to their White peers). If the gaps between groups exceed state-determined thresholds for significant disproportionality, the state must then examine local policies and require the district to devote more of its federal special education funds to early intervention. The Trump administration delayed these regulations, which had been scheduled to go into effect on July of 2018. This delay prompted the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) to file an ultimately victorious lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education.

²⁵ The CRDC survey collects data on race according to these categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, Hawaiian Pacific, and Two or More.

²⁶ The percentage numbers for White students vary depending on comparison made (i.e., Black students and Hispanic students). See methodology for further details.

- Conversely, both charter and traditional public schools identify a slightly lower percentage of Hispanic students as having a disability (i.e., 27.87% of the students with disabilities are Hispanic as compared to 29.93% of the total school population in charter schools and 27.82% of the students with disabilities are Hispanic as compared to 28.13% of the total school population in traditional public schools).

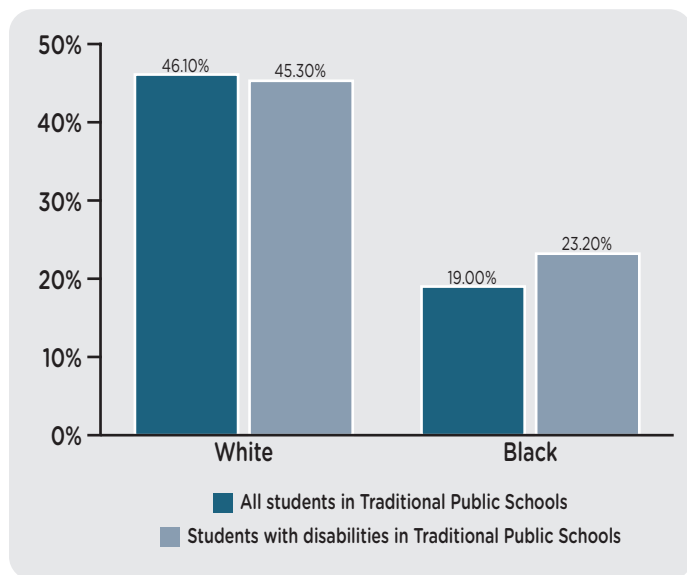


Figure 9B. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Traditional Public Schools Schools, by Race

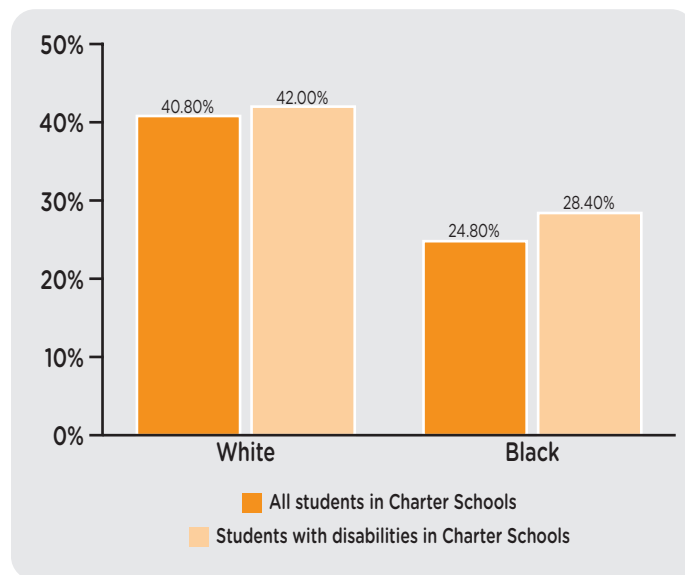


Figure 9C. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Charter Schools, by Race

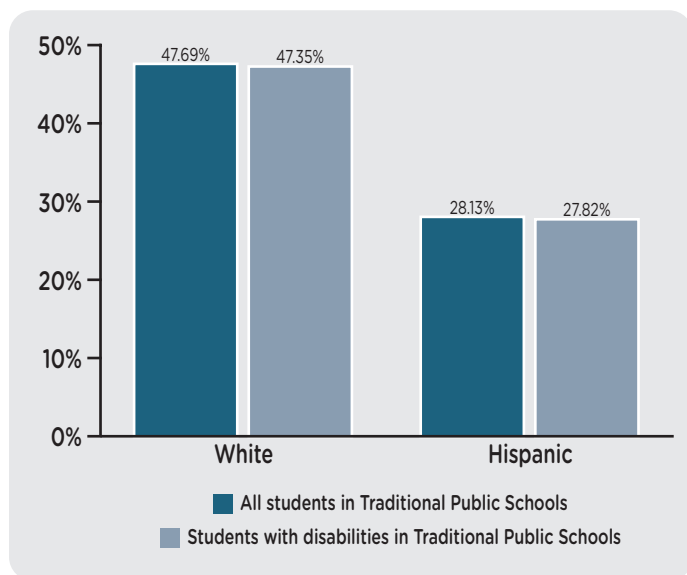


Figure 9D. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Traditional Public Schools Schools, by Race

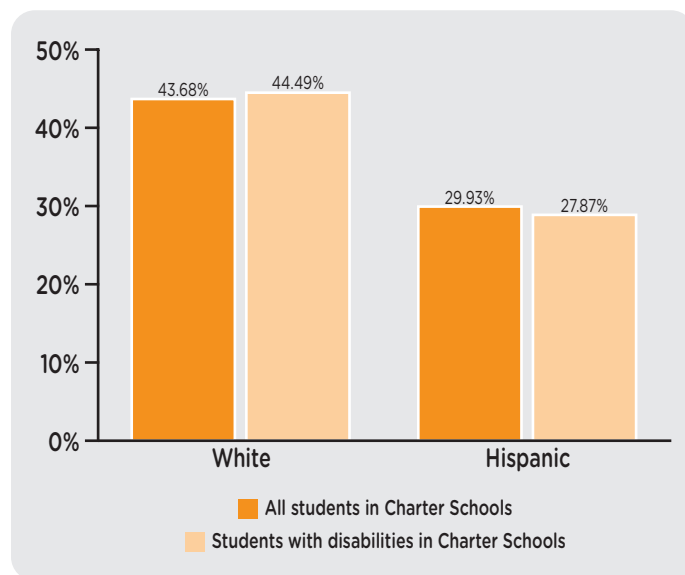


Figure 9E. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Charter Schools, by Race

Educational Placement



The CRDC survey does not collect detailed information regarding special education placements or services provided, but it does collect data regarding the extent to which students with disabilities are taught in general education classrooms. In line with federal statutes, the general education classroom is the presumptive placement because it maximizes students' access to the general education curriculum alongside their peers without disabilities, in addition to being their civil right. Since IDEA and Section 504 both have requirements related to providing students a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), it is relevant to consider the educational placement of students with disabilities in traditional public schools compared to charter schools.²⁷

There are three primary categories used to report educational placements of students with disabilities. They are:

- in the general education classroom 80% or more of the day;
- in the general education classroom between 40% and 79% of the day; and
- in the general education classroom for 39% or less of the day.

Figures 10A and 10B shows the percentages of students with disabilities in each of these categories. In general, charter schools report a larger percentage of students with disabilities (83.50%) spending 80% or more of their time in the general education classroom than traditional

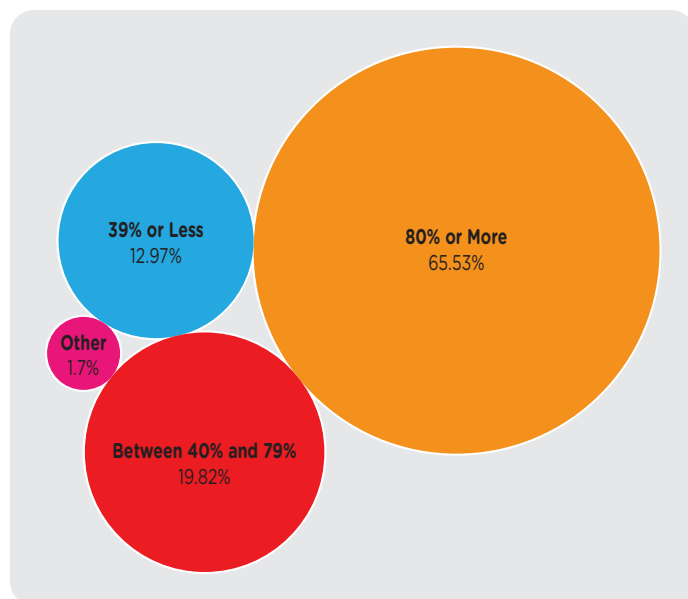


Figure 10A. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Traditional Public Schools by Percentage of Time in the General Education Classroom

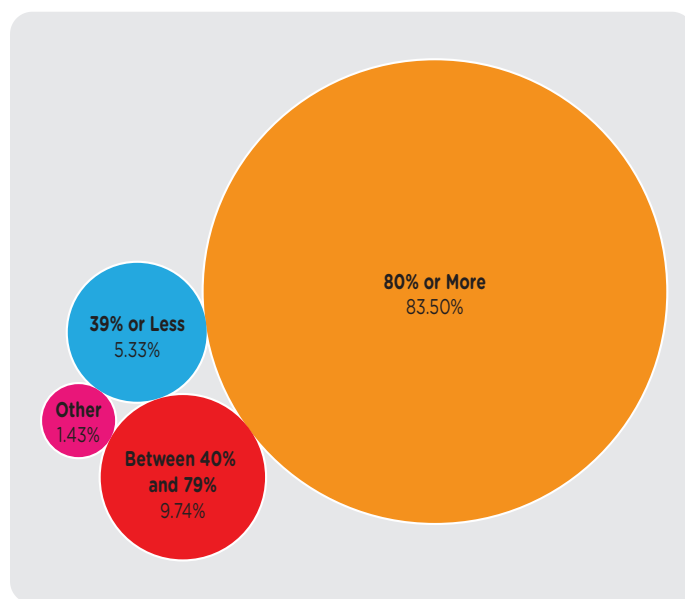


Figure 10B. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Charter Schools by Percentage of Time in the General Education Classroom

²⁷ Sources for presented figures with data representation by charter legal status (i.e., LEA) include the 2015-2016 CRDC core data set and EdFacts data set.

public schools (65.53%). Charter schools that are their own LEAs report a larger percentage of students with disabilities spending 80% or more of their time in the general education classroom compared to charter schools that are a part of an LEA (85.35% v. 80.31%) (**Figure 11**). Conversely, they also report a smaller percentage of students with disabilities spending 39% or less of their time in the general education classroom compared to charter schools that are a part of an LEA (3.93% v. 7.76%). Interestingly, the difference in “other” placements (i.e., out-of-school placements) is driven by charter schools that are part of an LEA, which may suggest that when schools take on the financial and legal responsibility for providing the full continuum of special education services, they are less likely to place students in an out-of-school placement.

There are a number of important nuances to consider when analyzing data by educational placement, including the extent to which the rates of identification, levels of student need, and types of services provided impact identification, placement, and outcomes. Absent additional data regarding educational placement by disability type, we cannot determine whether these data are a product of who is enrolling (e.g., more students with SLD and SLI) or charter schools moving more students into the general education classroom.

In practice, enrollment variances may stem from how districts cluster expertise and specialized programs, which lead to some schools serving a larger proportion of students with disabilities, especially students who require more significant supports and services. For instance, according to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2016, only 17% of students with intellectual disability and 13.7% students with multiple disabilities were served in what are considered inclusive educational placements (i.e., 80% or more of the day in a general education classroom) (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

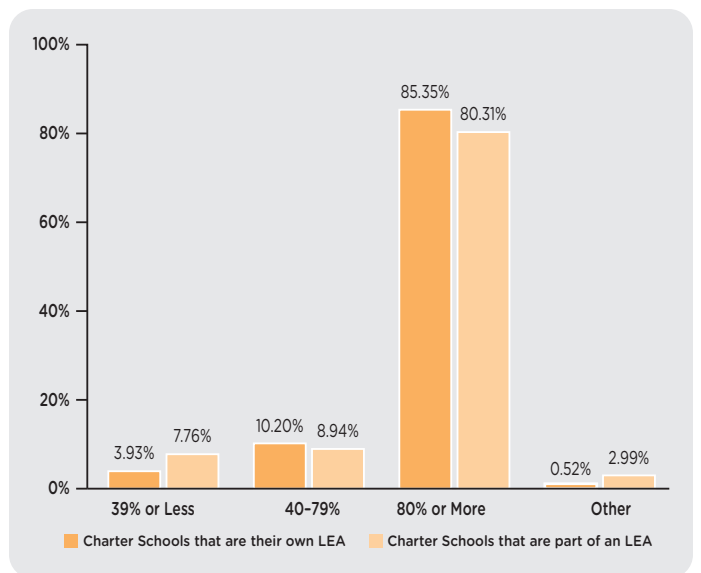


Figure 11. Educational Environment by Charter Legal Status

Discipline



Students with disabilities have historically been disciplined at significantly higher rates than their peers without disabilities. The 2015–2016 data documented trends similar to the 2011–2012 and 2013–2014 releases. However, in line with concerns that far too many students experience exclusionary discipline, it is noteworthy that in both sectors, both suspensions and expulsions have declined since the previous CRDC survey.

Disproportionality in discipline and the intersection of race and disability in discipline practices continue to be ongoing concerns given the implications for access to instruction. Per the 2016 Equity in IDEA regulations, all states must track and identify districts where students of color are disproportionately disciplined relative to their White peers.

Suspensions

The CRDC survey collects national and state-level suspension data for students with and without disabilities in charter and traditional public schools. In general, students with disabilities are suspended—and thus lose instructional time—approximately twice as often as their peers without disabilities across all schools (**Figure 12**). Out-of-school suspension rates for students with and without disabilities have decreased for both charter schools and traditional public schools since 2011–2012 (**Figure 13**).

Charter schools suspend²⁸ more students with disabilities (11.85 % vs 11.3%) and without disabilities compared to traditional public schools (5.6% vs 4.52). When virtual charter schools are removed from the analysis,²⁹ the percentage of students with disabilities who have

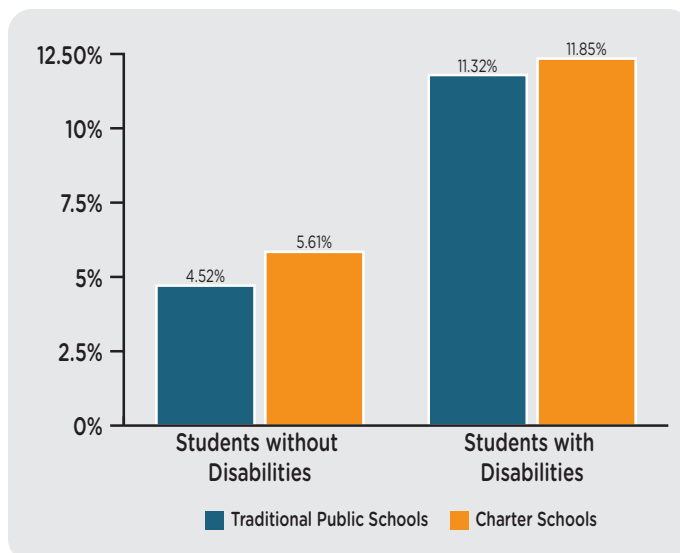


Figure 12. Percentage of Students with One or More Out-of-School Suspensions in 2015–2016, by Student Group

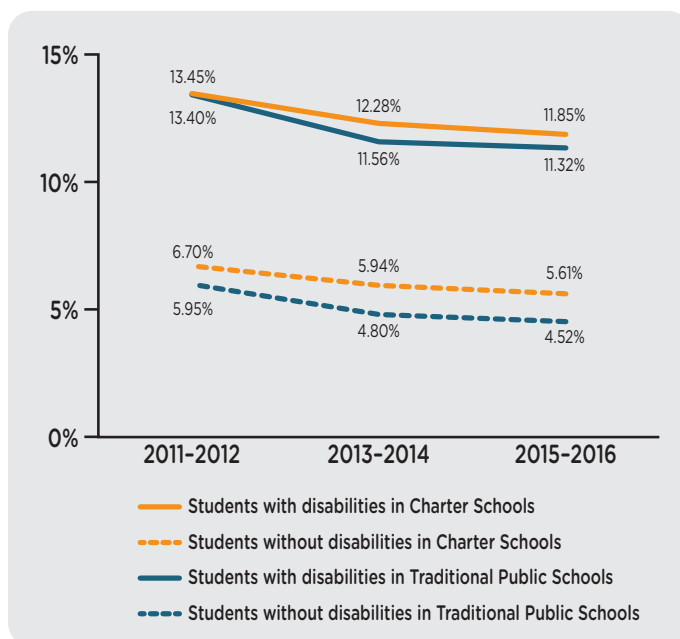


Figure 13. Percentage of Students with One or More Out-of-School Suspensions, by Student Group in 2011–2012, 2013–2014, and 2015–2016

²⁸ For the purposes of this report, we analyze suspension according to the CRDC category, one or more out of school suspensions.

²⁹ We presume the proportions change when virtual schools are removed due to the fact that virtual schools do not have the equivalent of out-of-school suspensions (Molnar 2019).

experienced one or more out-of-school suspensions increased from 11.85% to 12.27%.

- Among states with charter schools, Missouri had the highest rate of out-of-school suspensions for both students with and without disabilities (31.2% and 20.12%, respectively), followed by Tennessee (26.27% and 17.12%, respectively). Conversely, Kansas had the lowest rate of out-of-school suspensions for both students with and without students with disabilities (1.94% and 0.48%, respectively) (**Figure A4** in Appendix A).
- South Carolina had the highest rate of out-of-school suspensions for students with disabilities in traditional public schools (19.62%), followed by Louisiana (18.93%). Mississippi had the highest rate of out-of-school suspensions for students without disabilities in traditional public schools (9.59%), followed by South Carolina (9.46%). Conversely, Utah had the lowest rate of out-of-school suspensions for students with and without disabilities in traditional public schools (3.73% and 1.4%, respectively) (**Figure A5** in Appendix A).
- Among charter schools, those that operate as their own LEA suspend a larger proportion of students compared to charters that operate as part of an LEA for both students with (13.43% vs 9.61%) and without disabilities (6.82% vs 4.08%) (**Figure 14**).

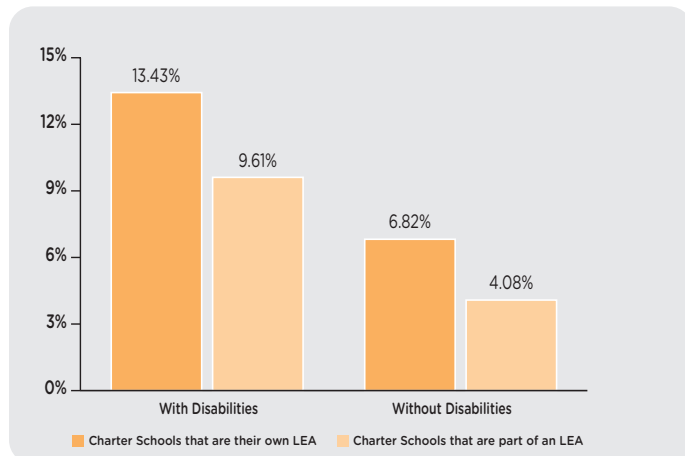


Figure 14. Percentage of Students with One or More Out-of-School Suspensions in 2015–2016, by Student Group and Charter Legal Status

Expulsions

Expulsion is an action taken by a school or district to remove a child from his/her regular school for the remainder of the school year or longer. Although the rates of expulsion are low (<1%) across both traditional public and charter schools, in general, students with disabilities are expelled more frequently than peers without

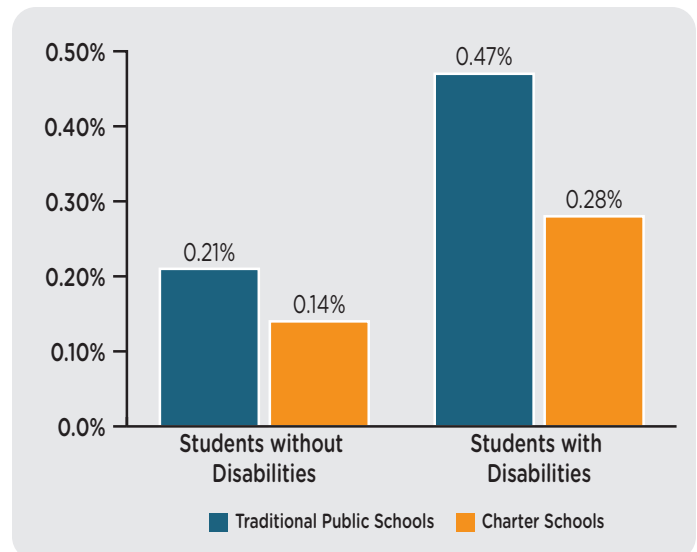


Figure 15. Percentage of Expelled Students from Total Enrollment, Separated by Student Group

disabilities across all schools (**Figure 14**). Charter schools expel a slightly smaller percentage of their students than do traditional public schools.³⁰ However, it is important to note that based on anecdotal evidence and some limited case law (e.g., Losen, Keith, Hodson, and Martinez 2016), expulsion may not be implemented in the same way in charter schools as in traditional public schools.³¹ That is, students may choose to exit a charter prior to being expelled or may be counseled out, and these actions may not be reported in formal data systems. Overall expulsion rates have decreased for both charter schools and traditional public schools since 2011–2012 (**Figure 16**).

Charter schools and traditional public schools expel a larger percentage of students with disabilities (0.28% and 0.47%) as compared to their peers without disabilities (0.14% and 0.21%).

Students with disabilities in charter schools were expelled at the highest rate in Tennessee and Missouri (both 1.08%), and at the second highest rate in Washington, DC (0.86%). Students without disabilities in charter schools were expelled at the highest rate in Indiana (1.36%), and at the second highest rate in Tennessee (0.66%). Charter schools did not expel any students in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Wyoming (**Figure A6** in Appendix A).

³⁰ This number does not change with the removal of virtual schools from the sample.

³¹ Under the laws of most states, expulsion from a traditional public school lasts for one year, while expulsion from a charter school generally results in the permanent removal of a student from the school.

Students with disabilities in traditional public schools were expelled at the highest rate in Tennessee (1.63%), and at the second highest rate in Louisiana (1.54%). Students without disabilities in traditional public schools were expelled at the highest rate in Louisiana (0.80%), and at the second highest rate in Tennessee (0.75%). Students with disabilities in traditional public schools were expelled at the lowest rate in FL (0.02%), and students without disabilities in traditional public schools were expelled at the lowest rate in DC (0%) (**Figure A7** in Appendix B).

Charter schools that are their own LEA expel a larger proportion of students with disabilities (0.35%) than do charter schools that are part of an LEA (0.20%) (**Figure 17**).

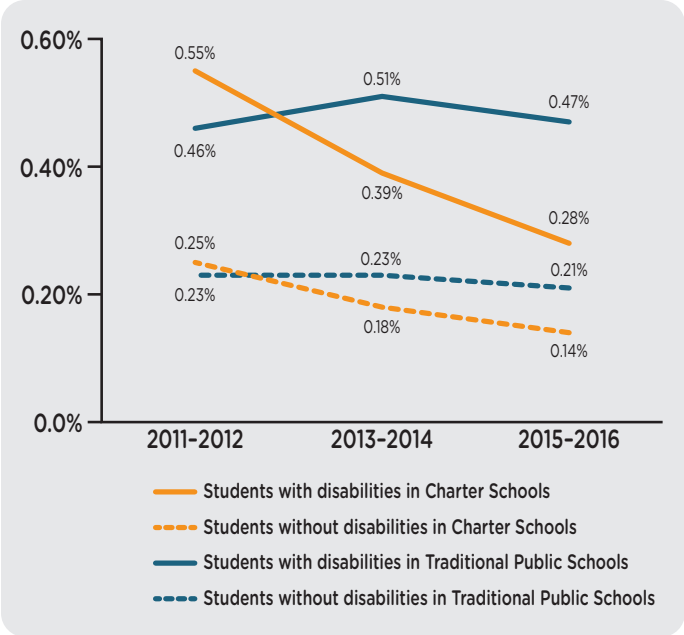


Figure 16. Percentage of Students Expelled, by Student Group in 2011-2012, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016

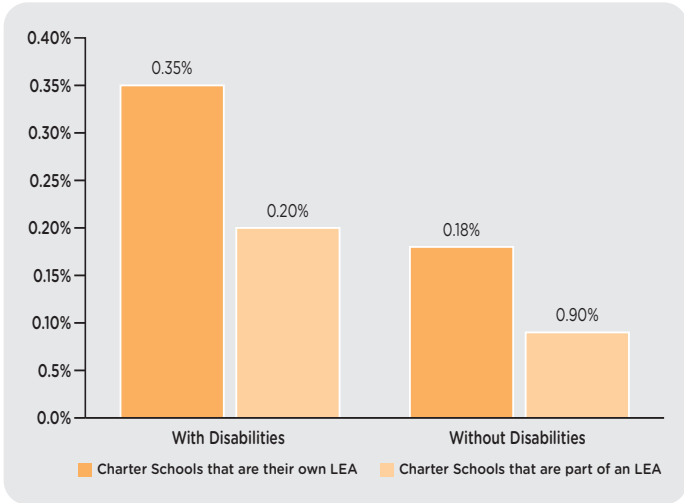
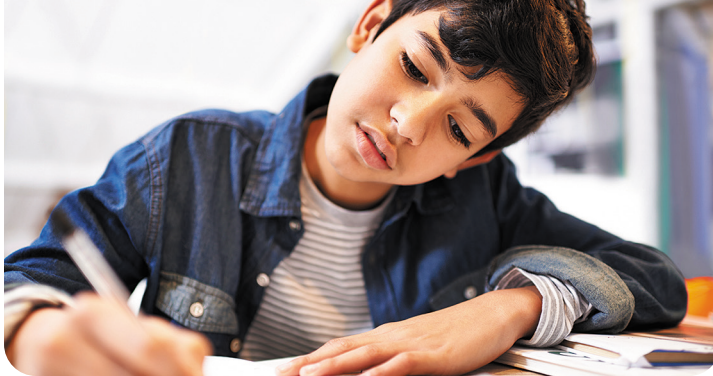


Figure 17. Percentage of Students Expelled in 2015-2016, by Student Group and Charter Legal Status

Specialized Charter Schools



Within the discussion about how to educate students with disabilities in charter schools, there is a separate but related debate about charter schools that specialize in educating students with disabilities.³² The question of whether or not these schools limit choices for students or decrease accountability and expectations is important when reviewing compliance with the “least restrictive environment” clause of IDEA (Morando Rhim, 2018).

Traditional public school systems have historically operated specialized schools or sent a small proportion of students to private placements. In many states, charter schools are granted the flexibility to tailor their programs toward serving certain populations of students particularly well, granting families the opportunity to access specialization if they so choose. The overarching goal of ensuring students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment is to educate them in the general education classroom with their peers unless a more restrictive placement is deemed appropriate by their IEP team. Reducing the number of segregated or “center-based” programs where students frequently have limited access to peers without disabilities and teachers with subject matter expertise has been a long-standing goal of policy makers and practitioners concerned about the outcomes of students with disabilities. Accordingly, there are concerns that the growth of specialized charter schools may translate into an increase in the number of segregated settings rather than a decrease as mandated by the broad goals of IDEA, and that families and students may have to choose unnecessarily restrictive settings in order to access quality learning opportunities. The challenge before the charter and traditional public school sectors is to ensure the programmatic innovation and excellence that the best specialized schools provide, which represent a small group

of individual students’ appropriate placement, does not evolve to specialized schools becoming the default or only option for students with disabilities.

The number of specialized charter schools has grown from 137 in 2013–2014 to 165³³ in 2015–2016.³⁴

- 118 of the specialized schools (72%) enroll more than 50% students with disabilities. The rest of the schools enroll at least 25% students with disabilities (but self-identify as specialized).³⁵ On average, specialized charter schools in our subset have a 66% enrollment of students with disabilities.
- 61% of the schools in the 2015–2016 specialized schools list serve students in elementary school, 65% serve students in middle school, and 64%³⁶ serve students in high school through the age of 22.

³² For the purposes of tracking the growth of specialized charter schools, we define them as a charter schools with 25% or more enrollment of students with disabilities that self-identify in the CRDC survey as “special education schools” an/or schools that report that 50% or more of their student population qualify for special education. Such schools typically focus entirely or primarily on educating students with disabilities.

³³ 111 of the 165 specialized charter schools were identified in the 2015–2016 CRDC data, either self-identifying as specialized or enrolling 50% or more students with disabilities. The remaining 54 schools either carried over from the Center’s 2013–2014 CRDC Report or via independent research by the Center’s staff, and were confirmed to have both over 25% enrollment of students with disabilities and a mission/model that suggests specialization (see Appendix C for a complete list of specialized schools and Appendix A for information on methodology).

³⁴ The purpose of creating this inventory of specialized schools is solely for the ongoing tracking of the growth of these specialized schools. It does not include charter schools that operate distinct specialized programs within their buildings (i.e., specialized classrooms). It is worth noting that this inventory neither serves as an endorsement of these schools, nor a measurement of their quality.

³⁵ An exception was made for Louisiana Key Academy, which has 15% enrollment of students with disabilities and specializes in serving students with dyslexia.

³⁶ Percentages equal more than 100 because categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 3. Snapshot of Specialized Charter Schools

Source	% of Specialized Schools	# of Schools
Self-Identified List	4.24%	7
50% or More List	19.40%	32
Self-Identified List and 50%+	43.64%	72
CRDC 13–14 List	30.91%	51
The Center’s Research	1.21%	2
Total		165
Enrollment of Students with IEPs		
0–25%	2.44%	4
26–50%	25.61%	42
51–75%	32.32%	53
76–100%	39.63%	65
Grades Served		
Elementary	60.6%	100
Middle	64.85%	107
High	63.64%	105

* Total number of schools by grades served is greater than 165 because schools tend to serve more than one grade span.

Enrollment by Disability Type at Specialized Charter Schools

Our analysis of specialized charter schools’ websites revealed that schools typically advertise that they serve students with multiple different disabilities or one specific disability. Of the schools we identified, most (63.3%) focus on two or more disabilities. Of the schools that advertise that they specialize in serving students with a specific disability, emotional disturbance (14.5% of the schools) and autism (14.5% of the schools) were the most common (**Figure 18**).

Specialized Charter School Locations by State

In addition to understanding the disability focuses of specialized charter schools, the Center also examined how these schools are distributed across the United States.

Florida, Ohio, and Texas are the three states with the highest number of specialized charter schools. It should be noted that in Ohio, the Summit Academy network accounts for 26 of that state’s 37 specialized charter schools. In Florida and Texas, most of these schools are not part of networks.³⁷

³⁷ It is important to note that some states (Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, etc.

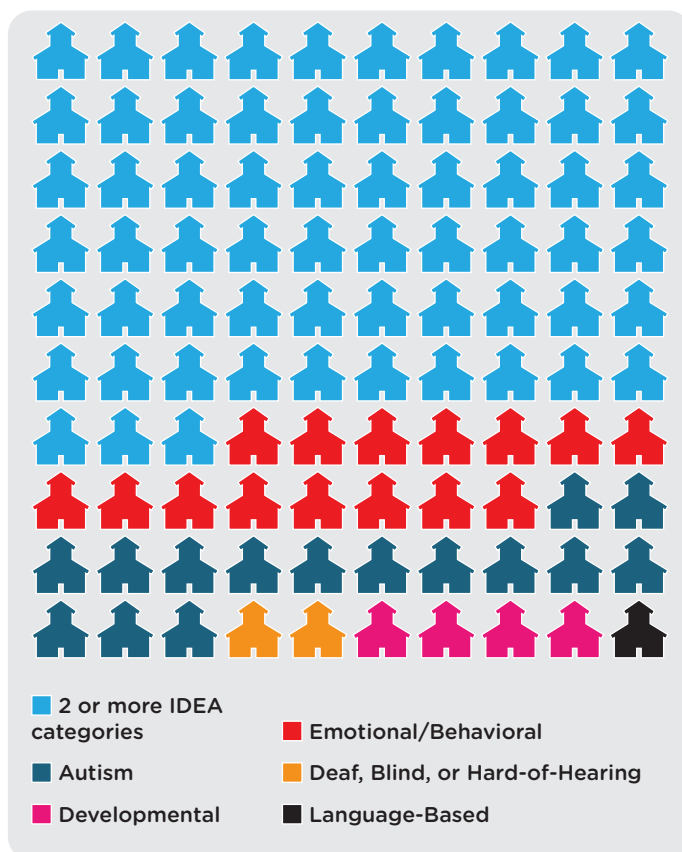


Figure 18. Disability Focus in Specialized Charter Schools

The most-represented disability focuses are not necessarily the same among specialized charter schools in Florida, Ohio, and Texas. In Florida, the majority of specialized charter schools have a general focus (n = 28), followed by a focus on autism (n = 7) and developmental delay (n = 3). In Ohio, 30 schools are focused on two or more disabilities (the Summit Academy network, which comprises the majority of Ohio’s specialized charter schools, mentions autism and specific learning disability in particular as areas of priority). Texas, the state with the most specialized charter schools, is different from the other two states since emotional disturbance is the most common disability focus (n = 10).

encourage the creation of charter schools that serve a majority of students with specific disabilities however, this does not always lead to a higher number of specialized charter schools in the state (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2017).

Implications and Discussion



Introduction

The achievement gap between students with and without disabilities is significant and persistent. While the political debate regarding charter schools heats up in state houses across the country, the discussion regarding the extent to which charter schools are not only welcoming but working to improve outcomes for students with disabilities gains urgency and relevance. We propose that, to be legitimate and sustainable, the charter sector must leverage its autonomy to benefit all students, including students who require specialized supports and services to be successful. While imperfect, the CRDC of the USED is the only national database which provides school-level data for all public schools — charter schools included. The CRDC stands alone in the scale and scope of insight it provides into who is enrolling in public schools across the nation and students' experiences according to key characteristics such as educational placement and discipline.

Implications of Key Findings

The data from the 2015–2016 CRDC confirm a broadly-observed trend: more students — across both the traditional public and charter school sectors — are being identified as having a disability and requiring specialized instruction, services, and supports including accommodations and modifications. Another continuing pattern is that charter schools continue to serve proportionately fewer students with disabilities than do traditional district schools. However, masked in the aggregated data are notable variances that suggest that schools in both the traditional and charter public sectors have ample room to improve the extent to which they wholly embrace educating students with disabilities. For instance, students with disabilities are suspended (and therefore lose instructional days) twice as often as their peers without disabilities across all public schools. And, both sectors identify a disproportionately greater percentage

of Black students as having a disability. Disproportionate representation of subpopulations of students across areas like these raises perennial concerns, given that absence from a classroom focused on meeting state standards (whether via suspension or placement in a segregated classroom for students with disabilities) can decrease expectations and outcomes for far too many students.

Parents, Choice, and Access to Quality Charter Schools

Overall, the most recent CRDC confirms that parents of students with disabilities continue to be interested in exercising choice; they are enrolling in charter schools at increasing rates every year and the difference in enrollment between the two sectors has decreased overall since 2008. There remains, however, room to improve access to charter schools for students with disabilities. A number of complex, inter-related challenges may contribute to the enrollment difference between the two sectors. For instance, we know that charter schools often struggle to leverage economies of scale and experience challenges in developing adequate capacity to meet the often diverse and complex learning needs of students with disabilities. Charters can also run into barriers as they work to navigate complicated systems that did not anticipate the creation of schools that function as single school districts or semi-autonomous schools within a district. Furthermore, in many locations they exist within a highly politicized environment that is coupled with high-stakes accountability structures. This reality could be hindering charter school leaders' willingness to try new approaches and take chances in highly regulated areas such as special education. Combined, these factors may make parents less likely to consider charter schools for their child with disabilities. This is unfortunate because students with disabilities arguably stand to gain even more from charter schools' ability to innovate.

LEA Status

Charter schools may operate as autonomous LEAs or as part of an LEA, which influences whether they are solely responsible for educating students with disabilities or share this responsibility with a traditional district or other entity. It is important to consider governance structure given observed variances according to charter legal status. Charter schools that operate as their own LEAs tend to enroll more students with disabilities, and these students spend more of their time in the general education classroom compared to students in schools that are part of an LEA. In practice, traditional LEAs that operate as the LEA for charter schools in their area may be directing some students to existing traditional school district programs rather than creating and/or locating new programs in charter schools. Conversely, charter schools that are their own LEAs may struggle to allocate enough resources needed to create new programs for students with disabilities. Variances according to legal status extend beyond those related to enrollment and educational placement, with findings demonstrating differences in student discipline as well. Charter schools that are their own LEAs tend to suspend and expel students with and without disabilities at higher rates compared to charters that are a part of an LEA. These data points raise questions regarding how a school's access to the resources of large districts (or lack thereof), or its use of the same policies and practices as its overarching traditional LEA, affect its capacity to meet students' individual needs.

Placement and Related Factors

While the data show that charter schools overall are serving students in the general education classroom for a larger portion of the day when compared to traditional public schools, there are a number of important nuances to consider, including the extent to which levels of student need and the types of services provided impact identification, placement, and outcomes. Notably, without information regarding model, supports, or programming, educational placement falls short of serving as a reliable or particularly satisfactory proxy for the extent to which being included in the general education classroom in fact enables individual students to access the general education curriculum.³⁸ Moreover, absent additional data

³⁸ Effective inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting requires school leaders and educators to evaluate existing systems and structures, such as curriculum, pedagogy, staffing, and school culture, and to ensure that these systems and structures are able to adapt to the individual student, not vice versa; integral practices that support authentic inclusion include (and are not limited to): Universal Design for Learning, Response to

regarding educational placement by disability type, we cannot determine whether these data are a product of who is enrolling (i.e., more students who can be successful in the general education classrooms for a larger portion of the day) or charter schools moving more students into the general education classroom. The fact that, on average, charter schools also suspend students with and without disabilities at a higher rate than do traditional public schools surfaces notable questions related to their capacity to meet their students' needs in the general classroom.

Services, Enrollment, and Funding

Overall, it would be reasonable to expect that across the universe of charter schools, on average, roughly 12% of the students enrolled would require special education supports and services, approximately the same as the average across the traditional school system, but the average enrollment of students with disabilities in the charter section is roughly 11%. Reducing the enrollment difference between charter schools and traditional schools is not necessarily a universal goal, however, given the unique context of each state's policies and practices. For example, some state funding systems provide incentives for districts to over- or under-identify students as having a disability. We need to be cautious that we do not transform the goal of ensuring students with disabilities can access charters, typically measured through enrollment, to another incentive to over-identify students. Rather, similar to our prior analyses, we propose that a more appropriate goal is to ensure that charter schools welcome all students, and that they have the capacity to offer appropriate specialized instruction, services, supports, and accommodations that enable students with disabilities to succeed.

Specialized Charter Schools

The notable growth of specialized charter schools for students with disabilities reflects demand on the part of parents. Families and communities seek alternatives when schools don't meet their needs (Hirschman, 1970); either due to limited ability to offer innovative programs or failure to provide adequate or appropriate services (National Council on Disability, 2018; DeArmond et. al, 2019). While recognizing the importance of providing unique programs and approaches, continued authorization

Intervention, Multi-tiered System of Support, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy, Social-Emotional curriculum, and collaborative staffing and leadership structures, to name a few (Odom and Soukakou, 2011).

and growth of specialized charter schools requires care given the potential unintended consequences, which could include: limiting choices for students, driving students into unnecessarily restrictive settings separate from their peers without disabilities, and decreasing accountability and expectations. The challenge before both the traditional public and charter school sectors is to ensure that the programmatic innovation and excellence provided by the best specialized schools exist without having specialized schools become the default or only option for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

As the charter sector continues to grow and serve not only more students nationally, but a significant or majority proportion of students in public schools in cities such as Camden, Kansas City, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Newark, and Washington, D.C., pressure to address and resolve potential barriers, ensure equal access, and provide quality supports for every student who enrolls will continue to mount. The most recent CRDC data highlights the importance of continuing to conduct and prioritize both quantitative and qualitative research related to how students with disabilities are educated in the charter sector.

Recommendations



Federal Level

- The USED, Office for Civil Rights should continue to collect, improve, and analyze large-scale datasets (such as the CRDC) to inform critical policy and related regulations and guidance.
- USED and the Department of Justice should maintain and effectively enforce all federal education and civil rights laws, related regulations, and guidance and prohibit charter schools from discriminating against students with disabilities; including funding state-level efforts to build charter schools' capacity in this area.
- Key divisions of USED, such as the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), should continue to collaborate with state policy makers and charter school authorizers and operators to facilitate the growth of high-quality supports, programs, and services for students with disabilities and ensure compliance with the policies and procedures outlined in the ESSA and IDEA.
- OSERS should fund a National Parent Training and Information Center focused exclusively on building the capacity of family centers to provide information and services regarding charter schools to families; especially in cities with significant choice options.

State Level

- State educational agencies (SEAs) and charter school authorizers should collaborate to ensure that charter schools develop adequate fiscal, human, legal, programmatic, and administrative capacities to educate their students. Together with policy makers, they should examine whether their systems and structures (e.g., funding mechanisms and eligibility criteria) are equitable and minimize incentives to over- or conversely under-identify students with disabilities or to serve students in more restrictive settings than necessary or appropriate for their individual needs.
- SEAs and charter school authorizers, notably sometimes the same entity, should improve and standardize how they collect and report data on enrollment and discipline. By developing high expectations reflected in clear policies and accountability frameworks, they can make certain that schools uphold all applicable laws and demonstrate positive and measurable outcomes for students with disabilities as a criterion to continue receiving public funding.
- SEAs should embrace the implementation of the *Equity in IDEA* significant disproportionality regulations and ensure that data is being tracked and used to inform both policy and related regulations and guidance.
- SEAs should conduct periodic reviews of authorizing policies and practices—especially when there are notable differences in enrollment of students with disabilities in traditional and charter schools—to ensure that such policies are not contributing to the creation or continuation of barriers to access for students with disabilities.
- SEAs should utilize Charter School Program (CSP) grant technical assistance set aside funds to proactively initiate efforts to improve the capacity of both charter school authorizers and charter schools to effectively educate their students with disabilities.

Local/Authorizer Level

- LEAs overseeing charter schools that operate as part of their LEA should develop clear and intentional policies regarding how they negotiate the shared responsibility to educate students with disabilities to make certain that students do not encounter barriers when electing to enroll in charter schools and that guaranteed rights and critical resources follow students.
- LEAs, especially those in geographic areas with a large number or proportion of charter schools, should proactively develop and assess systems (i.e., robust information systems for families, uniform enrollment systems, and strategies to build capacity to educate students who require significant supports) that ensure families of students with disabilities are able to readily exercise choice.
- Charter school authorizers should track and examine enrollment, educational placement, discipline, and growth/outcome data on an annual basis to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded the same opportunities in charter schools as all other students.

School Level³⁹

- Schools should clearly communicate their commitment to upholding students' rights and protections and articulate policies and procedures to ensure they welcome, retain, and provide equitable enrollment, programmatic, and physical access to students with disabilities in accordance with federal civil rights statutes. Efforts should include communicating an explicit commitment to serving students with disabilities in promotional materials and ensuring staff who interact with parents are knowledgeable about the school's responsibility to provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- Schools should educate students in the least restrictive environment, thereby allowing for learning predominantly in high-quality general education settings alongside peers with and without disabilities and leveraging prevention and targeted intervention approaches to support all students. When necessary, instruction and supports should be modified, adapted, and differentiated to promote student growth, and schools' disciplinary practices should not disproportionately impact students with disabilities.

- Schools should hold all students to high expectations and provide instruction, both general and specialized, that is data-driven, evidence-based, student-centered, and culturally responsive. They should employ highly-skilled staff members and provide high-quality professional development opportunities.
- Schools should allocate adequate resources to provide necessary supports and services to students with disabilities (e.g., traditional public schools leverage federal and state as well as local general operating funds to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities). Schools should build the capacity of general and special education teachers regarding identifying and providing appropriate special education and related services to students with a diverse range of disabilities and leverage their autonomy and flexibility to maintain high standards, promote quality, and cultivate innovation.
- Schools should embrace and enhance opportunities for partnership and engagement with stakeholders by providing transparent and accessible information and involving students/families/guardians in all decision making.

Stakeholder Level (e.g., Advocates and Funders)

- Philanthropic donors, city-based education "champion" organizations, state charter school associations, and special education collaboratives or cooperatives should partner to address the many challenges autonomous charter schools face (e.g., small size, limited resources, difficulty building and sustaining capacity to provide quality services and supports, and limited access to existing special education structures and supports). Collectively, they can provide schools with access to essential professional development opportunities and technical assistance to support students with disabilities, providing resources and tools to assist charter schools in understanding their responsibilities related to students with disabilities.
- Non-profit organizations and advocates should proactively collaborate to ensure that families access high-quality information that will inform decision-making regarding their children's education.
- Charter support organizations should embed robust content (i.e., more than basic compliance 101) regarding educating students with disabilities into enrollment support materials, incubation efforts for new and

³⁹ These recommendations reflect ideas and language from "Principles of Equitable Schools," developed by the Center's Equity Coalition.

turnaround schools, and professional development for charter school leaders and teachers.

- Private donors should help drive improved access and outcomes for students with disabilities by tracking metrics (e.g., enrollment, discipline, and academic growth) related to educating students with disabilities and reward schools that demonstrate growth for all students as opposed to absolute performance, which can serve as a disincentive to serving students with disabilities.

Appendices



Appendix A: Detailed Methodology

The purpose of this report was to better understand the special education landscape in both charter and traditional public schools in the nation. Using the CRDC data from 2015–16, key variables such as total enrollment, enrollment by student disability category, disability category by type of school, provision of special education and related services, discipline information, and school specialization were examined. The following sections detail the methodology used to assess the findings in this report.

Overall Enrollment of Students with Disabilities

The 2015–2016 CRDC collected information from 95,507 public schools from across the US. Of those schools, 6,129 were charter schools.

Decisions Related to Privacy-protected Values, Missing Values, and Not Applicable Values

In analyzing the CRDC, it was necessary to make a number of decisions regarding how to clean the data. Perhaps the most important decision was how to deal with masked values. Three types of masked values were observed in the dataset:

- **Privacy-protected values**, which are values of 2 or below, were masked with a “-2” value
- **Missing values** were marked with a “-5” value
- **Not applicable values** were marked with a “-9” value

Missing and not applicable values within the CRDC were observed for enrollment variables under both IDEA and Section 504. However, privacy-protected values were only observed for enrollment variables under IDEA. Enrollment under IDEA within the CRDC was disaggregated by gender and had to be combined to form an aggregate total enrollment under IDEA. Thus, any schools with privacy protected values for either gender were dropped from the analysis.

Incorrect Charter School Identification

The cleaning methodology (presented below) entailed identifying and reclassifying schools that erroneously identified themselves as “charter schools.” A school’s charter identification was considered erroneous if it self-identified as a charter school despite the fact that the school’s state did not have any charter schools or did not have charter school legislation in 2015–16. Nine states (Alabama, Kentucky, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia) did not have charter schools or charter school legislation as of 2015–16 (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2017). Any schools in these states that self-identified as charter were re-categorized to reflect their true identification. It is worth noting that because the CRDC is self-reported, there remains the possibility that other schools may be incorrectly coded in the dataset.

Analysis of Enrollment under IDEA

Data Cleaning

The CRDC population was cleaned for student enrollment by school type and for enrollment under IDEA in the following eight steps (**Table A1** shows the number of schools included in this analysis after cleaning and **Table A2**, at the end of step 8 summarizes the data cleaning for all stages):

Step 1: This step of data cleaning removed 85 schools. CRDC variable names used in this step include:

- tot_enr_m
- tot_enr_f

One school was removed from the population because it was missing (-5) total enrollment values for male and female students; another 85 schools were taken out because they said they enrolled “0” male and female students.

Table A1: Population of Schools in CRDC

School type	Number of schools, by type	Percent of schools, by type
Traditional Public Schools	80,316	93.54%
Charter	5,548	6.46%
Alternative	1,276	1.49%
Magnet	3,379	3.94%
Special Education	1,569	1.83%
Total*	85,864	107.25%

* Total number of schools and total percent of schools by type is greater than the number of schools in the CRDC because school types are not mutually exclusive.

Table A2: Total Number of Schools Re-Categorized or Removed in Steps 1-5

	Number of schools re-categorized	Number of schools removed from the sample
Step 1	—	85
Step 2	2	—
Step 3	0	—
Step 4	—	9,111
Step 5	—	299
Total	2	9,495

Step 2: Re-categorized schools identified as charter schools in states without charter school laws. CRDC variable names used in this step include:

- lea_state
- sch_status_charter

Two states without charter school laws (South Dakota and West Virginia) each had one school report that it was a charter school. These schools were all re-categorized as non-charter schools.

Step 3: Re-categorized schools with missing values (–5) for school type. CRDC variable names included:

- sch_status_sped
- sch_status_magnet
- sch_status_charter
- sch_status_alt

No values were recategorized.

Step 4: Schools with privacy protected values (–2) for both male and female enrollment under IDEA were removed from the analysis. CRDC variable names for this step included:

- sch_enr_idea_m
- sch_enr_idea_f

In total, 9,111 schools had privacy protected values for both male and female enrollment under IDEA and were removed from the sample.

Step 5: Schools that reported having more students with disabilities than the total number of students were removed from the analysis. CRDC variable names for this step included:

- sch_enr_idea_m
- sch_enr_idea_f
- tot_enr_m
- tot_enr_f

299 schools were removed from the sample.

Descriptive Statistics for Schools Included in the Analysis

In all, 85,864 schools were included in the analysis. Of those schools, 5,548 were charters and 80,316 were traditional public schools (see **Table A3** for summary statistics for schools in the sample). The analysis of enrollment under IDEA contained 89.70% of all CRDC traditional public schools and 81.32% of all CRDC charters. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, there were 6,861 charter schools operating during 2015–16 academic year (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Data Dashboard). This would mean that the analysis of enrollment under IDEA captured 80.86% of all charter schools in the country. Because the CRDC disaggregated total enrollment variables by gender, we combined the gender counts to create a total enrollment (for enrollment under IDEA, enrollment under Section 504, and overall total enrollment).

Table A3. Summary Statistics of Total Enrollment, by School Type

Statistics	All Schools in Analysis	Charter School in Enrollment Analysis	Traditional Public School in Enrollment Analysis
Number of schools	85,864	5,548	80,316
Average enrollment of students	572.62	490.7	578.28
Median enrollment of students	479	362	486
Total enrollment of students	49,168,541	2,722,392	46,446,149
Enrollment of students (1st quartile)	310	215	318
Enrollment of students (3rd quartile)	697	586	703
Standard deviation of enrollment	449.43	597.57	436.66

Overall Enrollment and Enrollment under IDEA

Table A4 shows the summary of enrollment under IDEA and total student enrollment by type of school for each state in the US.

Table A4. Enrollment under IDEA and Total Enrollment by Type of School and State

State	Traditional Public Schools			Charters		
	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment of SWDs	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment of SWDs
AK	340	120817	16790	21	5304	582
AL	1263	710781	87840	0	N/A	N/A
AR	927	441068	52842	49	20476	2030
AZ	1253	903014	111538	406	159910	15140
CA	7805	5574441	619357	951	502951	48267
CO	1464	777133	85407	187	100750	6239
CT	1072	521823	68420	18	8000	738
DC	108	47590	6657	92	30576	4246
DE	199	123733	20447	23	12653	1363
FL	2929	2490815	336209	506	247741	22663
GA	2151	1656500	194124	112	94788	9557
HI	246	170114	17931	25	8668	794
IA	1244	491929	58774	2	371	76
ID	506	240351	24874	41	17424	1573
IL	3607	1890512	257714	55	61984	8825
IN	1726	978062	144674	60	30631	4314
KS	1226	476459	66652	6	3490	360
KY	1225	676765	88529	0	N/A	N/A
LA	1170	630575	71259	122	67669	6715

Table A4. Enrollment under IDEA and Total Enrollment by Type of School and State (continued)

State	Traditional Public Schools			Charters		
	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment of SWDs	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment of SWDs
MA	1717	901421	156251	82	40177	5921
MD	1133	728687	81478	234	155750	18552
ME	514	169578	29210	5	1170	238
MI	2772	1341133	177243	297	136992	14010
MN	1604	804454	117841	165	45297	6363
MO	2046	882515	119400	55	19037	1856
MS	844	456689	56327	2	226	28
MT	416	127349	14950	0	N/A	N/A
NC	2290	1436331	178622	144	79932	7602
ND	352	102153	14237	0	N/A	N/A
NE	878	306740	47098	0	N/A	N/A
NH	416	174000	26950	10	1322	191
NJ	2272	1290919	201635	77	37458	3685
NM	659	306066	44728	75	20640	2889
NV	529	428975	51410	43	35159	3353
NY	4423	2555336	417011	235	104991	15302
OH	3175	1627188	234056	314	111386	18253
OK	1629	663920	104508	31	16862	2153
OR	1050	535715	71385	98	28228	3136
PA	2762	1582148	253750	170	129151	21997
RI	278	134290	19681	20	6623	844
SC	1122	729786	94854	55	27632	2675
SD	401	123471	16735	0	N/A	N/A
TN	1617	953721	128037	78	26027	2859
TX	7196	4957431	438412	442	221231	14804
UT	830	594702	75718	109	66707	9098
VA	1872	1276158	162969	7	1007	182
VT	258	77124	11238	0	N/A	N/A
WA	1990	1073402	136280	0	N/A	N/A
WI	1867	814775	112751	121	35574	4229
WV	673	276555	44288	0	N/A	N/A
WY	270	90935	12468	3	427	42
Grand Total	80316	46446149	5981559	5548	2722392	293744

Table A5 shows the percentage of students with disabilities in traditional public schools and charter schools. The table also presents the difference between enrollment percentage of students with disabilities in traditional public schools and charter schools.⁴⁰

Table A5. Percent of Students with Disabilities, by School Type and State

State	% Total Enrollment under IDEA	Enrollment under IDEA TPS	Enrollment under IDEA Charter	Difference in Enrollment under IDEA
AK	13.77%	13.90%	10.97%	2.93%
AL	12.36%	12.36%	N/A	N/A
AR	11.89%	11.98%	9.91%	2.07%
AZ	11.92%	12.35%	9.47%	2.88%
CA	10.99%	11.11%	9.60%	1.51%
CO	10.44%	10.99%	6.19%	4.80%
CT	13.05%	13.11%	9.23%	3.88%
DC	13.95%	13.99%	13.89%	0.10%
DE	15.99%	16.53%	10.77%	5.76%
FL	13.10%	13.50%	9.15%	4.35%
GA	11.63%	11.72%	10.08%	1.64%
HI	10.47%	10.54%	9.16%	1.38%
IA	11.95%	11.95%	20.49%	-8.54%
ID	10.26%	10.35%	9.03%	1.32%
IL	13.65%	13.63%	14.24%	-0.61%
IN	14.77%	14.79%	14.08%	0.71%
KS	13.96%	13.99%	10.32%	3.67%
KY	13.08%	13.08%	N/A	N/A
LA	11.17%	11.30%	9.92%	1.38%
MA	17.22%	17.33%	14.74%	2.59%
MD	11.31%	11.18%	11.91%	-0.73%
ME	17.25%	17.23%	20.34%	-3.11%
MI	12.94%	13.22%	10.23%	2.99%
MN	14.62%	14.65%	14.05%	0.60%
MO	13.45%	13.53%	9.75%	3.78%
MS	12.33%	12.33%	12.39%	-0.06%
MT	11.74%	11.74%	N/A	N/A
NC	12.28%	12.44%	9.51%	2.93%
ND	13.94%	13.94%	N/A	N/A
NE	15.35%	15.35%	N/A	N/A
NH	15.48%	15.49%	14.45%	1.04%
NJ	15.46%	15.62%	9.84%	5.78%
NM	14.57%	14.61%	14.00%	0.61%
NV	11.80%	11.98%	9.54%	2.44%
NY	16.25%	16.32%	0.1457	1.75%
OH	14.51%	14.38%	16.39%	-2.01%
OK	15.67%	15.74%	12.77%	2.97%
OR	13.21%	13.33%	11.11%	2.22%

⁴⁰ P-value < 0.05, the difference between enrollment of students with disabilities in charter schools and traditional public schools is significant.

Table A5. Percent of Students with Disabilities, by School Type and State (continued)

State	% Total Enrollment under IDEA	Enrollment under IDEA TPS	Enrollment under IDEA Charter	Difference in Enrollment under IDEA
PA	16.11%	16.04%	17.03%	-0.99%
RI	14.57%	14.66%	12.74%	1.92%
SC	12.88%	13.00%	9.68%	3.32%
SD	13.55%	13.55%	N/A	N/A
TN	13.36%	13.42%	10.98%	2.44%
TX	8.75%	8.84%	6.69%	2.15%
UT	12.82%	12.73%	13.64%	-0.91%
VA	12.77%	12.77%	18.07%	-5.30%
VT	14.57%	14.57%	N/A	N/A
WA	12.70%	12.70%	N/A	N/A
WI	13.76%	13.84%	11.89%	1.95%
WV	16.01%	16.01%	N/A	N/A
WY	13.69%	13.71%	9.84%	3.87%
Grand Total*¹	12.76%	12.88%	10.79%	2.09%

* Because not all states in the country have charter schools, the national percentages presented in the final row may overstate the percentage difference between the two school types. As a result, a separate analysis was conducted to compute a national percentage for students with disabilities using only states that had charter laws. The percentage of students with disabilities in traditional public schools dropped from 12.88% to 12.84% and the difference between traditional public schools and charter schools dropped from 2.09% to 2.05%.

¹ P-value <0.05, the difference between enrollment of students with disabilities in charter schools and traditional public schools is significant.

Enrollment by Gender

Table A6 shows enrollment under IDEA by gender and type of school.

Table A6: Enrollment by Gender and Type of School

State	Traditional Public Schools		Charter Schools	
	Males under IDEA (%)	Females under IDEA (%)	Males under IDEA (%)	Females under IDEA (%)
AK	9.10%	4.80%	6.79%	4.19%
AL	8.03%	4.33%	N/A	N/A
AR	7.89%	4.09%	6.45%	3.46%
AZ	8.25%	4.11%	5.98%	3.49%
CA	7.54%	3.57%	6.27%	3.33%
CO	7.23%	3.76%	3.98%	2.22%
CT	8.74%	4.37%	5.93%	3.30%
DC	9.36%	4.63%	8.97%	4.91%
DE	10.77%	5.76%	6.65%	4.12%
FL	9.09%	4.41%	6.04%	3.10%
GA	7.90%	3.82%	6.82%	3.26%
HI	7.32%	3.22%	6.24%	2.92%
IA	7.75%	4.20%	12.67%	7.82%
ID	6.74%	3.61%	5.74%	3.28%
IL	9.00%	4.63%	9.21%	5.03%
IN	9.63%	5.16%	9.25%	4.84%
KS	9.10%	4.88%	5.76%	4.56%
KY	8.83%	4.25%	N/A	N/A
LA	7.63%	3.67%	6.62%	3.31%
MA	11.29%	6.05%	9.22%	5.52%
MD	7.60%	3.58%	8.15%	3.76%
ME	11.32%	5.90%	13.76%	6.58%
MI	8.74%	4.47%	6.65%	3.58%
MN	9.83%	4.82%	9.07%	4.98%
MO	9.08%	4.45%	6.40%	3.35%
MS	8.23%	4.10%	8.85%	3.54%
MT	7.65%	4.09%	N/A	N/A
NC	8.32%	4.12%	6.24%	3.27%
ND	9.01%	4.93%	N/A	N/A
NE	10.01%	5.35%	N/A	N/A
NH	10.15%	5.34%	8.70%	5.75%
NJ	10.46%	5.16%	6.09%	3.75%
NM	9.52%	5.09%	8.90%	5.10%
NV	8.04%	3.94%	6.21%	3.32%
NY	10.79%	5.53%	9.36%	5.21%
OH	9.40%	4.98%	10.19%	6.20%
OK	10.11%	5.63%	7.83%	4.93%
OR	8.79%	4.53%	7.09%	4.02%
PA	10.44%	5.60%	10.57%	6.46%

Table A6: Enrollment by Gender and Type of School (continued)

	Traditional Public Schools		Charter Schools	
State	Males under IDEA (%)	Females under IDEA (%)	Males under IDEA (%)	Females under IDEA (%)
RI	9.86%	4.79%	7.87%	4.88%
SC	8.71%	4.28%	6.15%	3.53%
SD	8.75%	4.80%	N/A	N/A
TN	8.71%	4.72%	7.20%	3.78%
TX	5.92%	2.93%	4.29%	2.40%
UT	8.19%	4.54%	8.92%	4.71%
VA	8.60%	4.17%	12.91%	5.16%
VT	9.31%	5.26%	N/A	N/A
WA	8.45%	4.24%	N/A	N/A
WI	9.33%	4.50%	7.82%	4.07%
WV	10.35%	5.66%	N/A	N/A
WY	8.92%	4.79%	7.03%	2.81%
Grand Total¹	8.56%	4.32%	6.98%	3.81%

¹ P-value < 0.05, the difference in enrollment of students with disabilities by gender for both charter schools and traditional public schools is significant.

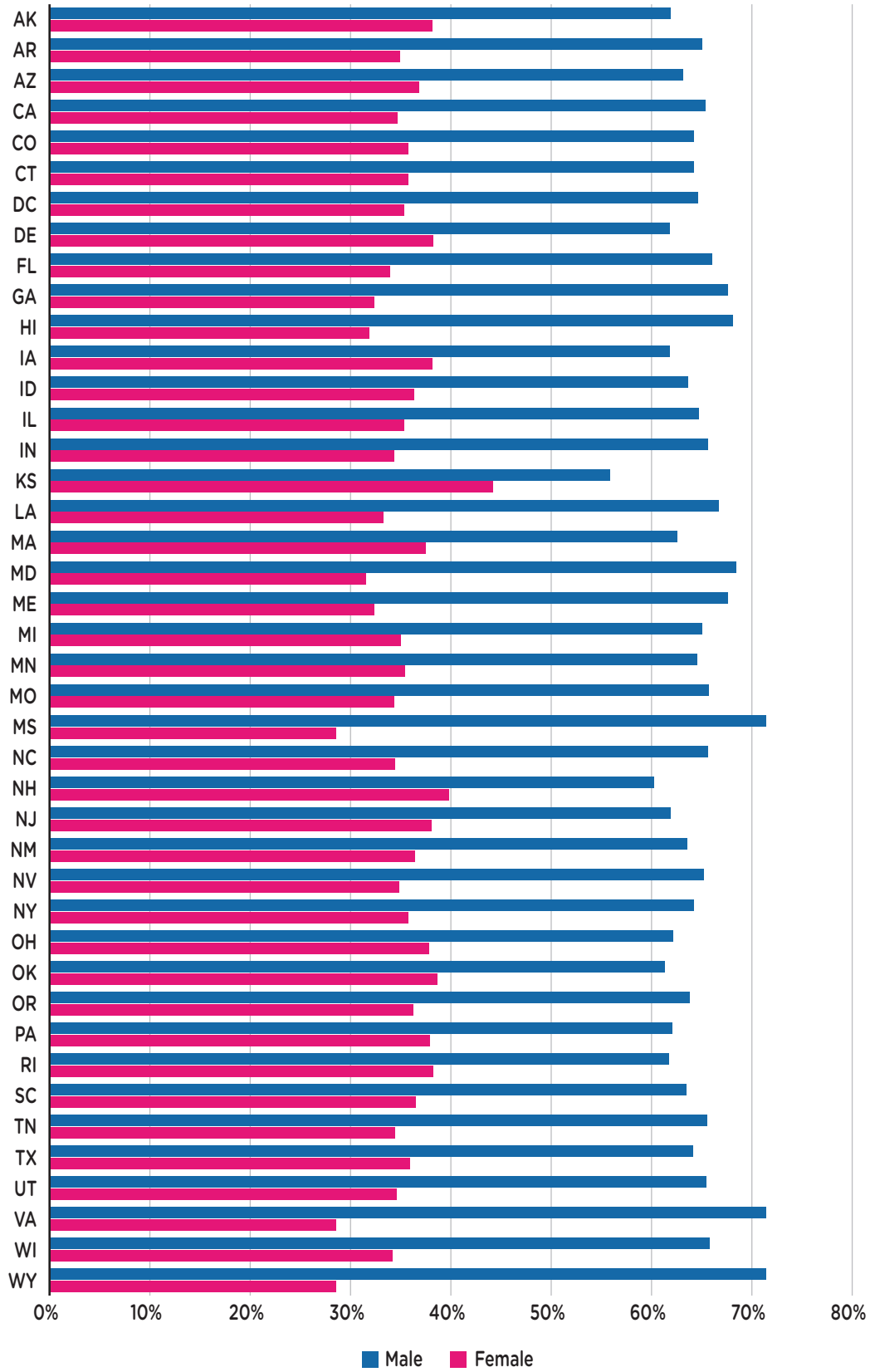


Figure A1: Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Charter Schools by Gender by State

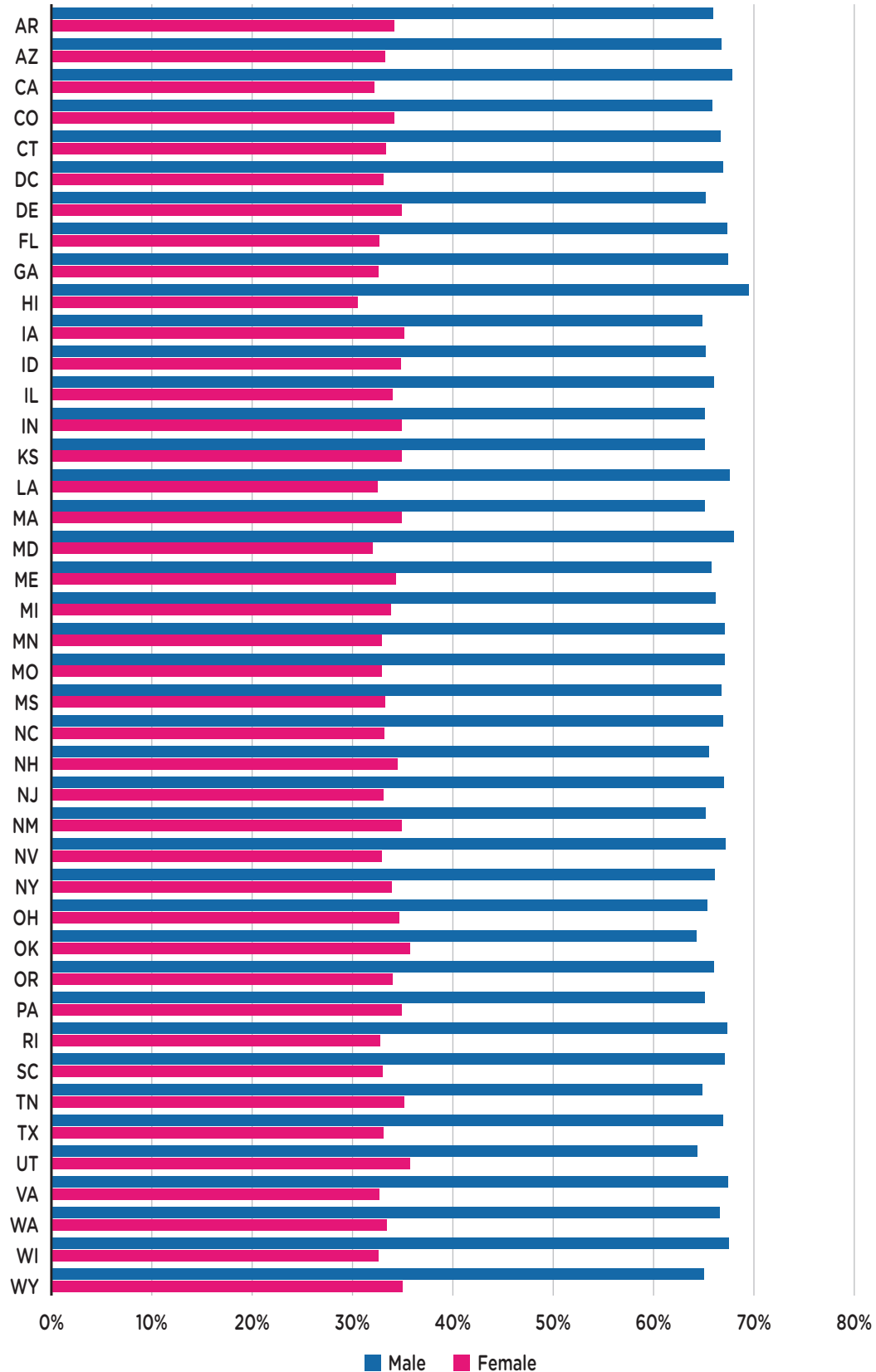


Figure A2: Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in 2015-2016 in Traditional Public Schools by Gender by State

Enrollment by Race

Table A7 shows the total enrollment of students by race in all schools included in this survey.

Table A7. Total Enrollment of Students, by Race			
	All	Charter	TPS
White	48.9%	32.7%	49.8%
Black	15.3%	28.4%	14.6%
Hispanic	25.8%	30.5%	25.5%
Asian	5.0%	3.7%	5.1%
American Indian	1.1%	0.8%	1.1%
Hawaiian Pacific	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Two or More	3.5%	3.4%	3.5%

When analyzing enrollment under IDEA by race, we ran into a lot of suppressed values that did not give an accurate picture of the enrollment proportions in the CRDC sample of schools. In order to have a more representative picture, we decided to do two separate analyses:

- Enrollment under IDEA of White students as compared to Black students, and
- Enrollment under IDEA of White students as compared to Hispanic students

All schools that had suppressed data (-2) for enrollment under IDEA for a specific race category in the analysis were removed.

Table A8 shows the number of schools that were retained in the above analysis and what percent that represents from the larger CRDC sample.

Table A8. Number of Schools in Enrollment under IDEA by Race Analysis		
Analysis	Charter	Traditional Public School
White v. Black	1,619 (29.1%)	34,880 (43.4%)
White v. Hispanic	2,031 (36.6%)	44,146 (54.9%)

Enrollment under Section 504

The above sample of schools was also used to calculate enrollment under 504 in charter schools and traditional public schools.

Table A9. Enrollment under Section 504 and Total Enrollment by Type of School and State

State	Traditional Public Schools				Charter Schools			
	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment under 504	Enrollment under 504 (%)	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment under 504	Enrollment under 504 (%)
AK	340	120817	1629	1.35%	21	5304	115	2.17%
AL	1263	710781	8480	1.19%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
AR	927	441068	16693	3.78%	49	20476	850	4.15%
AZ	1253	903014	10471	1.16%	406	159910	2661	1.66%
CA	7805	5574441	64023	1.15%	951	502951	7918	1.57%
CO	1464	777133	14175	1.82%	187	100750	1700	1.69%
CT	1072	521823	24381	4.67%	18	8000	267	3.34%
DC	108	47590	598	1.26%	92	30576	536	1.75%
DE	199	123733	3697	2.99%	23	12653	516	4.08%
FL	2929	2490815	72383	2.91%	506	247741	7938	3.20%
GA	2151	1656500	26286	1.59%	112	94788	1981	2.09%
HI	246	170114	3139	1.85%	25	8668	215	2.48%
IA	1244	491929	7942	1.61%	2	371	6	1.62%
ID	506	240351	6256	2.60%	41	17424	579	3.32%
IL	3607	1890512	48798	2.58%	55	61984	2249	3.63%
IN	1726	978062	17444	1.78%	60	30631	554	1.81%
KS	1226	476459	4808	1.01%	6	3490	35	1.00%
KY	1225	676765	12880	1.90%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LA	1170	630575	31820	5.05%	122	67669	5924	8.75%
MA	1717	901421	37705	4.18%	82	40177	1846	4.59%
MD	1133	728687	24251	3.33%	234	155750	2962	1.90%
ME	514	169578	6478	3.82%	5	1170	111	9.49%
MI	2772	1341133	18398	1.37%	297	136992	1264	0.92%
MN	1604	804454	12550	1.56%	165	45297	910	2.01%
MO	2046	882515	14737	1.67%	55	19037	217	1.14%
MS	844	456689	1844	0.40%	2	226	2	0.88%
MT	416	127349	2173	1.71%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NC	2290	1436331	22825	1.59%	144	79932	1450	1.81%
ND	352	102153	2129	2.08%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NE	878	306740	3051	0.99%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NH	416	174000	10370	5.96%	10	1322	68	5.14%
NJ	2272	1290919	33218	2.57%	77	37458	690	1.84%
NM	659	306066	4219	1.38%	75	20640	204	0.99%
NV	529	428975	5461	1.27%	43	35159	948	2.70%

Table A9. Enrollment under Section 504 and Total Enrollment by Type of School and State (continued)

	Traditional Public Schools				Charter Schools			
State	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment under 504	Enrollment under 504 (%)	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Total Enrollment under 504	Enrollment under 504 (%)
NY	4423	2555336	55881	2.19%	235	104991	1995	1.90%
OH	3175	1627188	36731	2.26%	314	111386	1676	1.50%
OK	1629	663920	8072	1.22%	31	16862	145	0.86%
OR	1050	535715	9632	1.80%	98	28228	605	2.14%
PA	2762	1582148	32769	2.07%	170	129151	2185	1.69%
RI	278	134290	3909	2.91%	20	6623	243	3.67%
SC	1122	729786	12985	1.78%	55	27632	774	2.80%
SD	401	123471	2007	1.63%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TN	1617	953721	13364	1.40%	78	26027	323	1.24%
TX	7196	4957431	252426	5.09%	442	221231	5835	2.64%
UT	830	594702	5578	0.94%	109	66707	939	1.41%
VA	1872	1276158	20023	1.57%	7	1007	29	2.88%
VT	258	77124	3921	5.08%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WA	1990	1073402	28422	2.65%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WI	1867	814775	6813	0.84%	121	35574	209	0.59%
WV	673	276555	4753	1.72%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WY	270	90935	1605	1.76%	3	427	6	1.41%
Grand Total⁴¹	80316	46446149	1074203	2.31%	5548	2722392	59680	2.19%

⁴¹ P-value > 0.05, the difference between enrollment of students under 504 in charter schools and traditional public schools is not significant.

Determining Charter LEA Status

Charter schools can be categorized by their legal status and can either be (1) an independent entity serving as their own LEA or (2) part of another LEA. Unfortunately, the CRDC does not contain any information pertaining to charter legal status. The 2015–16 Common Core of Data (CCD) Local Education Agency Universe file was used to determine a charter’s legal status. The variables, along with the possible response options, are provided below:

● Education Agency Type Code (LEA_TYPE)

- 1 = Regular, local school district
- 2 = Regular, local school district that is a component of a supervisory union
- 3 = Supervisory union
- 4 = Regional education services agency
- 5 = State-operated agency
- 6 = Federally operated agency
- 7 = Charter agency
- 8 = Other education agency

● Agency Charter Code (AGCHRT)

- 1 = All schools are charters
- 2 = Some but not all schools are charters
- 3 = No schools are charters
- N = Not applicable

● LEA charter school status for federal programs (CHARTER_LEA_TEXT)

- LEA for ESEA and Perkins
- LEA for IDEA
- LEA for federal programs
- Missing
- Not LEA for federal programs
- Not a charter district
- Not applicable

A charter school was considered its own LEA if its administrative district met the criteria listed below. If the charter school did not meet the criteria, it was considered part of an LEA. **Table A10** shows the breakdown of charter legal status by state.

An “Education Agency Type Code” of 7 (agencies for which all associated schools are charter schools).

1. An “Agency Charter Code” of 1 (all associated schools are charter schools).
2. An “LEA Charter Status” of “LEA for ESEA and Perkins’, ‘LEA for IDEA’ and ‘LEA for federal programs.’”

There were two exceptions made to this categorization:

1. Charter schools in New York, NY, that were classified as their own LEAs in the CCD but are part of the New York City Department of Education for special education services (New York Department of Education). Thus, all charter schools in NYC were classified as being part of an LEA for purposes of this analysis.
2. Charter schools in Connecticut are classified as their own LEAs for everything but special education services (Connecticut School Finance Project). Thus, all charter schools are classified as being part of an LEA for purposes of this analysis.

Some CA charter schools that were classified as part of an LEA were actually their own LEA for special education services, and were classified as their own LEA (California Department of Education). This was determined manually by flagging which charter schools submitted an Annual Performance Report on special education to the California Department of Education. Since the Annual Performance Report for special education is only submitted by independent LEAs, all charters that submitted the report were classified as their own LEA for this analysis.

Table A10. Charter Legal Status by State

State	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Total
AK	0	21	21
AR	30	19	49
AZ	357	49	406
CA	315	636	951
CO	28	159	187
CT	0	18	18
DC	92	0	92
DE	23	0	23
FL	0	506	506
GA	0	112	112
HI	0	25	25
IA	0	2	2
ID	36	5	41
IL	55	0	55
IN	60	0	60
KS	0	6	6
LA	90	32	122
MA	77	5	82
MD	0	234	234
ME	5	0	5
MI	297	0	297
MN	165	0	165
MO	55	0	55
MS	2	0	2
NC	144	0	144
NH	0	10	10
NJ	76	1	77
NM	43	32	75
NV	22	21	43
NY	59	176	235
OH	313	1	314
OK	31	0	31
OR	0	98	98
PA	162	8	170
RI	17	3	20
SC	55		55
TN	0	78	78
TX	416	26	442
UT	109	0	109
VA	7	0	7
WI	20	101	121
WY	0	3	3
National	3161	2387	5548

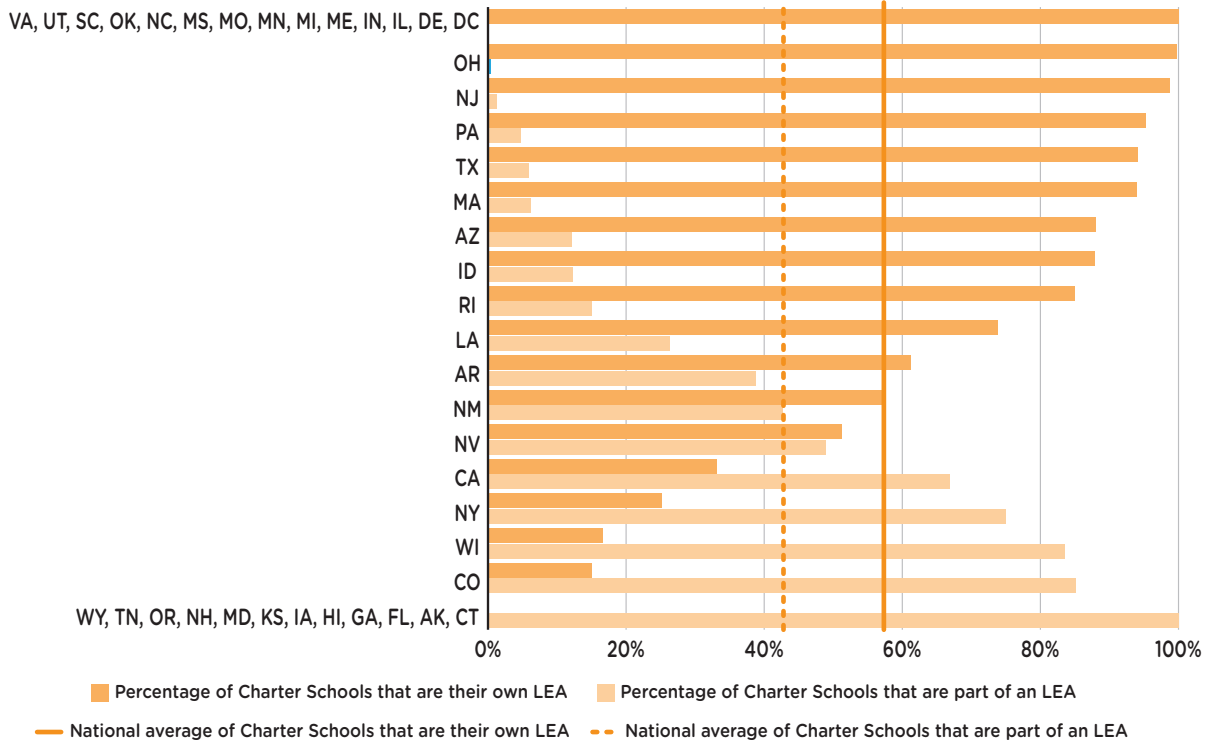


Figure A3. Percentage of Charter Schools by Legal Status by State

Enrollment by Disability Category and Educational Placement

When the 2015–16 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) was released, the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) provided 17 EDFacts⁴² appended data files. Because the appended files contained pertinent information for some analyses presented in this report not found within the CRDC, it was necessary to combine the two datasets. The following section of Appendix A describes the merging process.

The Merging Procedure

Two of the main goals of this section were to analyze the enrollment of students with disabilities by (a) disability category and (b) educational placement. The information for these two analyses were found in the EDFacts appended data file titled “ID 74 SCH—Educational placement by Gender by Disability.” We made the decision to not combine the appended EDFacts data with the raw 2015–16 CRDC data file that contained the full population of

public schools.⁴³ Rather, it was combined with a cleaned version of the CRDC used for the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools’ (NCSECS) report on enrollment under IDEA by school type.⁴⁴

A two-step process was used to merge the CRDC and EDFacts datasets. The first step was to take advantage of the fact that both EDFacts and the CRDC utilized the same “combokey”—a unique school level identifier developed by OCR. Whereas EDFacts includes only one unique school identifier (the combokey), the CRDC includes two. In addition to the combokey, the CRDC provides a NCES School ID—a different unique school level identifier developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In most cases, the combokey matched the NCES School ID. However, because there were instances where they differed,⁴⁵ we took the remaining CRDC schools that

⁴² EDFacts is a U.S. Department of Education initiative that centralizes performance data supplied by K–12 state education agencies with other data assets, such as financial grant information, within the Department to enable better analysis and use in policy development, planning, and management.

⁴³ A school with a privacy protected value for enrollment under IDEA in the CRDC would also have privacy protected values when looking at student enrollment disaggregated by disability category. Thus, using the raw CRDC file would have led to the same number of schools included in the analysis. The advantage of using the cleaned CRDC file was that it simplified the process of cleaning masked values while also correcting erroneous charter school identification.

⁴⁴ Refer to NCSECS’ (2019) report on enrollment under IDEA for the cleaning process.

⁴⁵ The CRDC recognizes that there are discrepancies between the combokey and NCES school ID due to differences in definitions and procedures between EDFacts and the CRDC. For more information see the Public-use Data File User’s Manual for the 2015–16 CRDC.

did not merge from step 1 and changed the matching criteria to the NCES School ID found within the CRDC. We had a final match rate of 94.77%.

Table A11 shows the results of the merging process by school type and **Table A15** shows the results by both state and school type.

Table A11. Merging Process Summary by School Type

	Traditional Public Schools	Charters	Total
Number of Schools in Cleaned CRDC File	80,316	5,548	85,864
Number of Schools in Disability Category Enrollment Analysis	76,636	4,740	81,376
Percentage of Schools in Enrollment Analysis Matched for Disability Category Enrollment Analysis	95.42%	85.43%	94.77%

Disability Category Enrollment Analysis

The EDFacts file disaggregated student enrollment and educational placement by disability category. The disability categories were as follows:

- AUT— Autism
- DB— Deaf-blindness
- DD— Developmental Delay
- EMN— Emotional Disturbance
- HI—Hearing Impairment
- MR— Intellectual Disability
- MD— Multiple Disabilities
- OI— Orthopedic Impairment
- SLD— Specific Learning Disability
- SLI— Speech or Language Impairment
- TBI— Traumatic Brain Injury
- VI— Visual Impairment
- OHI— Other Health Impairment

Also included was an additional disability category for missing data labeled “Missing.” We discovered that the Missing disability category contained data for all schools in the entire sample from the state of Iowa. Moreover, all Iowa schools in the merged sample provided data only for the missing disability category and no others. These schools were left in the missing category, and schools that had privacy protected values, were removed from the disability category enrollment analysis.⁴⁶ **Table A12** shows the number of traditional public schools and charter schools that reported non-privacy protected student enrollment values by disability category.

Table A12¹. Number of Schools without Privacy Protected Values Reporting Enrollment by Disability Category and School Type

	Traditional Public Schools in Sample	Enrollment in TPS	Charter Schools In Sample	Enrollment in Charter
AUT	34,378	325,483	1,395	15,103
DB	16	76	1	11
DD	10,548	98,236	304	2,146
EMN	18,208	164,335	875	8,820
HI	1,798	15,549	47	464
MR	23,228	48,277	651	1,314
MD	5,988	247,386	143	6,228
OI	49,795	5,649	2,574	323
SLD	66,539	1,855,779	4,041	89,365
SLI	52,469	776,156	2,755	34,748
TBI	469	5,856	42	370
VI	265	2,253	17	101
OHI	49,795	623,629	2,574	27,958
MISSING	1,220	51,172	2	63
TOTALS		4,219,836		187,014

¹ Enrollment of students with disabilities are not significantly different (P-value >0.05) for traditional public schools and charter schools for all primary disability types except OHI, MD, MR, HI and DD

⁴⁶ Unlike the CRDC which had three types of masked values (missing data, privacy protected data, and not applicable data), EDFacts only had one type of masked value. Any value that was less than or equal to 2 received a value of “-2.”

Educational Placement Analysis

The educational placement analysis used the same cleaned sample as the disability category enrollment analysis. The same sample was used because this analysis examines the amount of time students with disabilities spend in general education classrooms (or education environment) by disability category (shown in **Table A13**). Information on educational placement was found in the appended EDFacts data file and included several educational placement variables. The educational placement variables used for the analyses were as follows:

- **RC80_M/RC80_F**—the number of male/female students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 80% or more of the school day.
- **RC79TO40_M/RC79TO40_F**—the number of male/female students with disabilities in the general education classroom from 40% to 79% of the school day.
- **RC39_M/RC39_F**—The number of male/female students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 39% or less of the school day
- Another variable, Total Membership, provided a total for the number of students with disabilities by disability category. This variable only contained a privacy protected value when all of the educational placement variables had privacy protected values. When at least one the educational placement variables had a non-privacy protected value, Total Membership equaled the number of students across the educational placement variables. In cases where Total Membership had a non-privacy protected value, the educational placement variables that had privacy protected values were set to zero.

Table A13¹. Educational Placement, by School Type

Educational Placement	Traditional Public Schools		Charter Schools	
	Total Students Reported	Schools in Sample	Total Students Reported	Schools in Sample
CF	125	5	8	1
HH	151	21	0	0
PPPS	164	25	0	0
RC39	141,274	7,588	1,337	128
RC79TO40	167,304	8,662	3,681	273
RC80	501,518	13,447	31,853	1,050
RF	935	56	27	1
SS	8,587	293	127	10
Grand Total	820,058		37,033	

* EDFacts includes five types of education environments that were merged to create the “other” environment in this analysis. Those five environments are correctional facility placements (CF), homebound/hospital placements (HH), parental placements in private schools (PPPS), residential facility placements (RF), and separate school placements (SS).

¹ Enrollment of students with disabilities are significantly different (P-value <0.05) for all educational placements

Enrollment by Disability Category and Educational Placement by Charter Legal Status

To compare enrollment by disability category and educational placement for charters based on their legal status, the charter data from the overall analysis of enrollment under IDEA was used. However, the sample of charters in this section is smaller compared to the sample of charters from the analysis of enrollment under IDEA. This is because the disaggregation of enrollment under IDEA by disability category led to more instances of privacy protected values which had to be removed from the analysis. **Table A14** shows the enrollment of students by disability type and charter legal status. **Table A15** shows the enrollment of students with disabilities by educational placement and charter legal status.

Table A14¹. Comparison of Disability Type by Charter Legal Status

Disability Type	# Schools in Sample		Total Students Reported	
	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA	Part of LEA
AUT	656	600	6787	6084
DD	137	196	963	1446
EMN	456	266	4509	2263
HI	24	26	158	224
MD	67	50	570	459
MISSING	0	15	0	498
MR	350	255	3169	2827
OHI	1194	988	13592	10192
OI	17	33	90	200
SLD	1806	1485	42005	34389
SLI	1256	1110	16346	14329
TBI	13	6	66	105
VI	6	8	28	36

¹ Charter enrollments of students with disabilities are not significantly different for charters that are their own LEA and charters that are a part of an LEA for any primary disability type.

Table A15. Comparison of Educational Placement by Charter Legal Status

Educational Environment	Total Students Reported		Schools in Analysis	
	Own LEA	Part of LEA	Own LEA	Part of LEA
RC39	5058	5772	374	309
RC79TO40	13141	6651	1002	510
RC80	109941	59737	2714	1763
Other	675	2224	62	8

Discipline of Students

Each analysis presented in this section draws from a range of discipline-related variables within the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Although discipline data was not affected by privacy protected values, there were instances of missing and not applicable values. As a result, the number of schools included in each analysis varied.

Since virtual schools have alternative discipline strategies, we wanted to see if overall discipline numbers were affected by removing virtual schools. Since the CRDC does not identify virtual schools, we used the search words “online” and “virtual” within the school name column to identify schools that were virtual. This gave us 133 schools (75 charter schools and 59 traditional public schools) that were removed from the discipline analysis. See table below for suspension and expulsion numbers for all schools after virtual schools were removed.

Suspensions	Traditional Public Schools	Charter Schools
Students with Disabilities	11.32%	12.27%
Students without Disabilities	4.52%	5.79%
Expulsions	Traditional Public Schools	Charter Schools
Students with Disabilities	0.47%	0.29%
Students without Disabilities	0.21%	0.14%

Suspensions and Expulsions

This section discusses the cleaning process for suspensions and expulsions as collected in the CRDC report. For all the analyses described here, the relevant CRDC variables were disaggregated by both disability status and gender. The gender variables were combined to form aggregate totals for students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Aggregate totals for each school were linked to the school’s enrollment data in order to generate a discipline rate by discipline category. For the discipline categories identified in this section, the following discipline rates were calculated:

- *Discipline rate of all students*—the result of all students disciplined divided by the total enrollment
- *Discipline rate of students without disabilities*—the result of all students with disabilities divided by the difference between total enrollment and enrollment under IDEA
- *Suspension rate of students with disabilities*—the result of all students with disabilities divided by the enrollment under IDEA

Table A16 shows the variables used for the following analyses: suspensions and expulsions, **Tables A17–20** provides the number of schools included in each of the analyses, and enrollment numbers used for the calculations.

Table A16. Variables for Discipline Analyses

Analysis	CRDC Variables Used
Suspensions	TOT_DISCWODIS_ISS_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_ISS_F Total number of male/female students without disabilities who received one or more in-school suspensions.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_ISS_IDEA_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_ISS_IDEA_F Total number of male/female students with disabilities who received one or more in-school suspensions.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_SINGOOS_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_SINGOOS_F Total number of male/female students without disabilities who received only one out-of-school suspension.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_SINGOOS_IDEA_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_SINGOOS_IDEA_F Total number of male/female students with disabilities who received only one out-of-school suspension.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_MULTOOS_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_MULTOOS_F Total number of male/female students without disabilities who received more than one out-of-school suspension.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_MULTOOS_IDEA_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_MULTOOS_IDEA_F Total number of male/female students with disabilities who received more than one out-of-school suspension.
Expulsions	TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWE_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWE_F Total number of male/female students without disabilities who received an expulsion with educational services.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWE_IDEA_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWE_IDEA_F Total number of male/female students with disabilities who received an expulsion with educational services.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWOE_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWOE_F Total number of male/female students without disabilities who received an expulsion without educational services.
	TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWOE_IDEA_M/TOT_DISCWODIS_EXPWOE_IDEA_F Total number of male/female students with disabilities who received an expulsion without educational services.

Table A17. Schools in Sample for Discipline Analysis (Suspensions), by School Type

	Traditional Public Schools	Charter Schools
Schools in Sample	79,160	5,449
Total Enrollment	46,191,725	2,626,315
Total Enrollment under IDEA	5,912,596	281,735
Students without Disabilities with only One Out-of-School Suspension	1,161,156	83,235
Students with Disabilities with only One Out-of-School Suspension	369,262	18,887
Students without Disabilities with More than One Out-of-School Suspension	658,122	52,463
Students with Disabilities with More than One Out-of-School Suspension	299,971	15,687

Table A18. Schools in Sample for Discipline Analysis (Suspensions), by Charter LEA Status

	Own LEA	Part of LEA
Schools in Sample	3,176	2,349
Total Enrollment	1,529,296	1,184,450
Total Enrollment under IDEA	172,156	119,850
Students without Disabilities with only One Out-of-School Suspension	54,642	28,756
Students with Disabilities with only One Out-of-School Suspension	12,416	6,762
Students without Disabilities with More than One Out-of-School Suspension	38,192	14,309
Students with Disabilities with More than One Out-of-School Suspension	11,045	4,656

Table A19. Schools in Sample and Enrollment for Discipline Analysis (Expulsions), by School Type

	Traditional Public Schools	Charter Schools
Schools in Sample	79,096	5,449
Total Enrollment	46,185,214	2,627,546
Total Enrollment under IDEA	5,910,107	281,828
Students without Disabilities Expelled with Educational Services	61,077	1,576
Students without Disabilities Expelled without Educational Services	23,318	1,677
Students with Disabilities Expelled with Educational Services	22,748	546
Students with Disabilities Expelled without Educational Services	4,972	281

Table A20. Schools in Sample for Discipline Analysis (Expulsions), by Charter LEA Status

	Own LEA	Part of LEA
Schools in Sample	3,174	2,348
Total Enrollment	1,529,432	1,184,325
Total Enrollment under IDEA	172,131	119,815
Students without Disabilities Expelled with Educational Services	830	754
Students without Disabilities Expelled without Educational Services	1,662	214
Students with Disabilities Expelled with Educational Services	361	195
Students with Disabilities Expelled without Educational Services	247	44

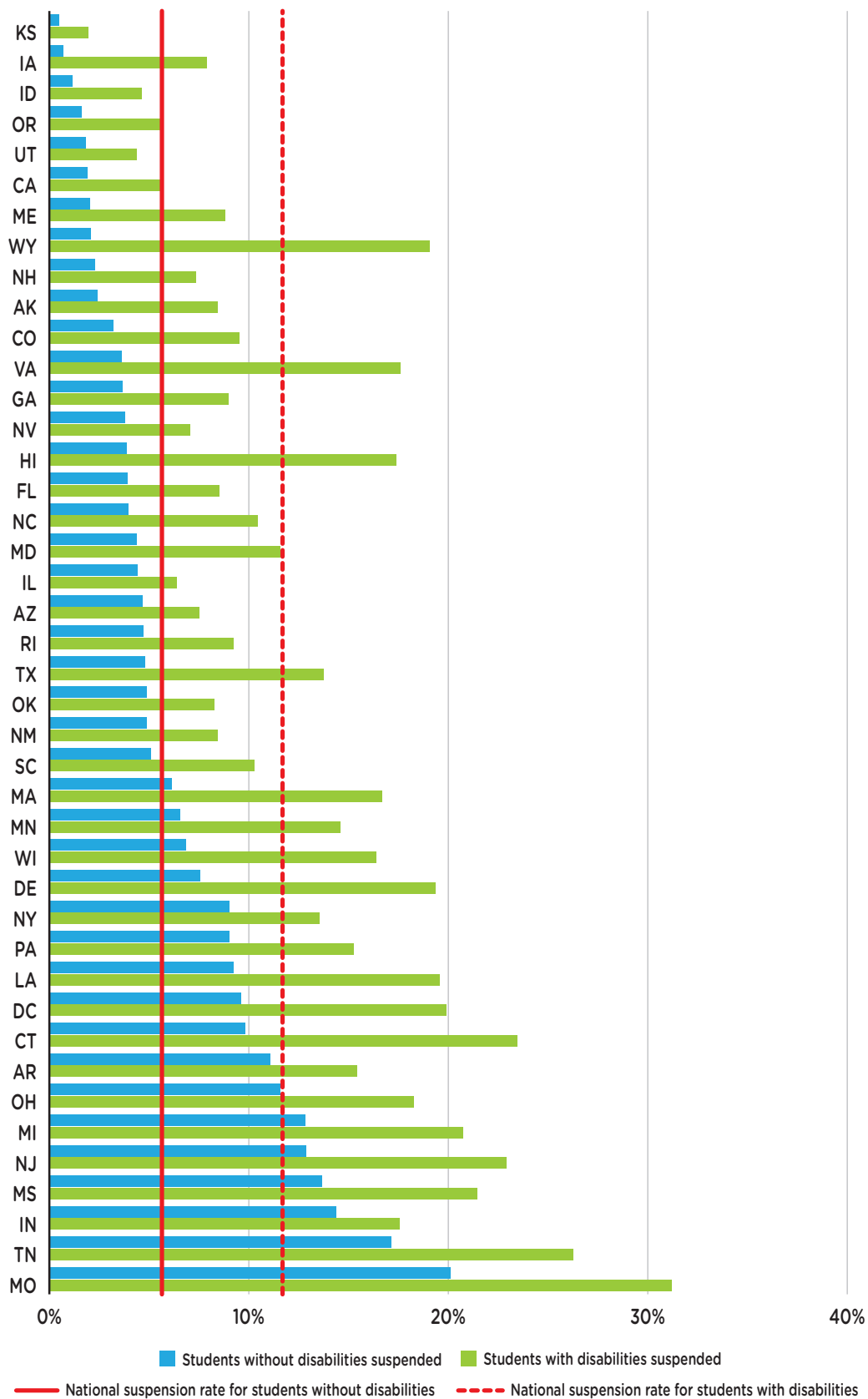


Figure A4. Percentage of Students in Charter Schools Suspended in 2015-2016, by Student Group and State

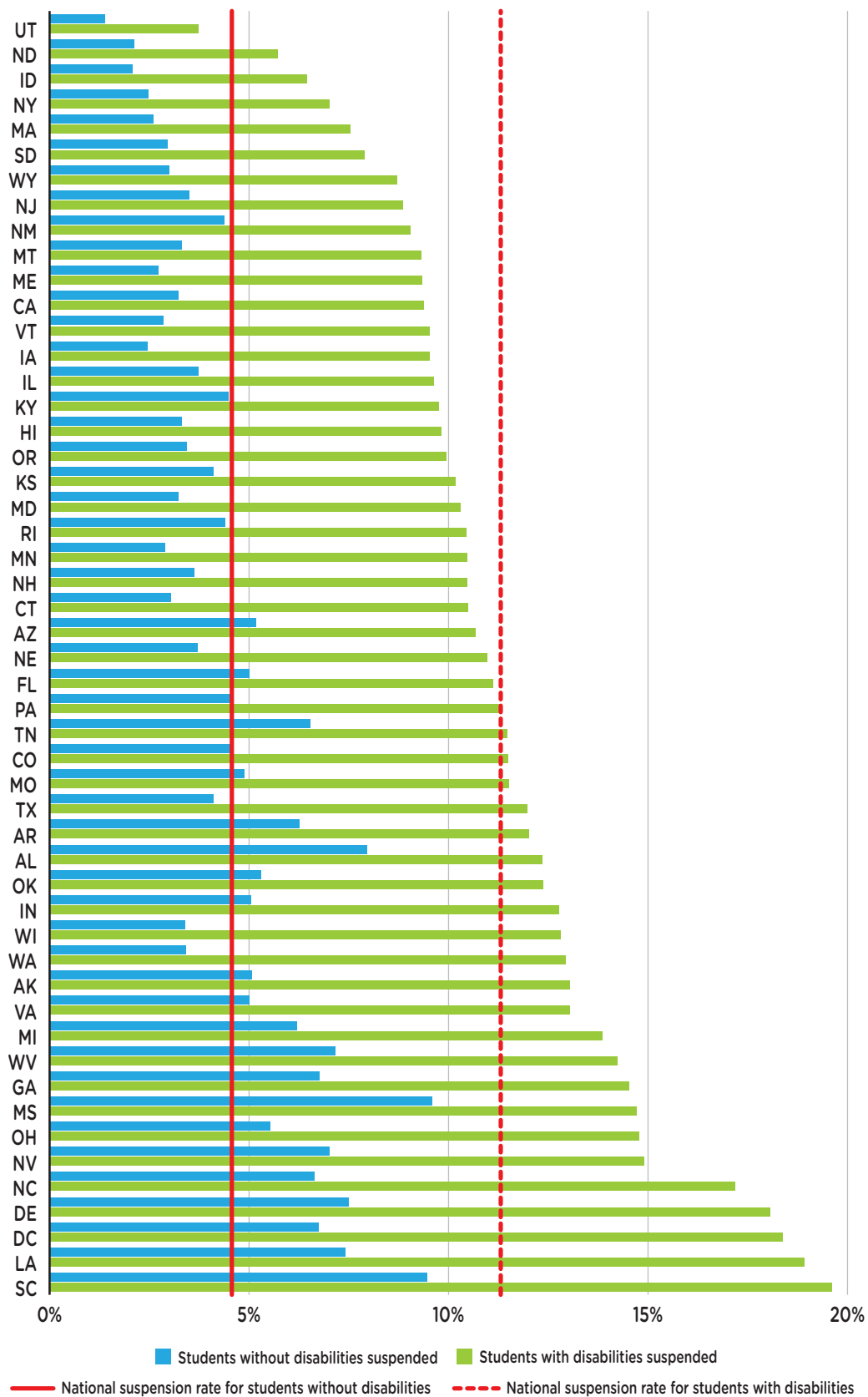


Figure A5. Percentage of Students in Traditional Public Schools Suspended in 2015–2016, by Student Group and State

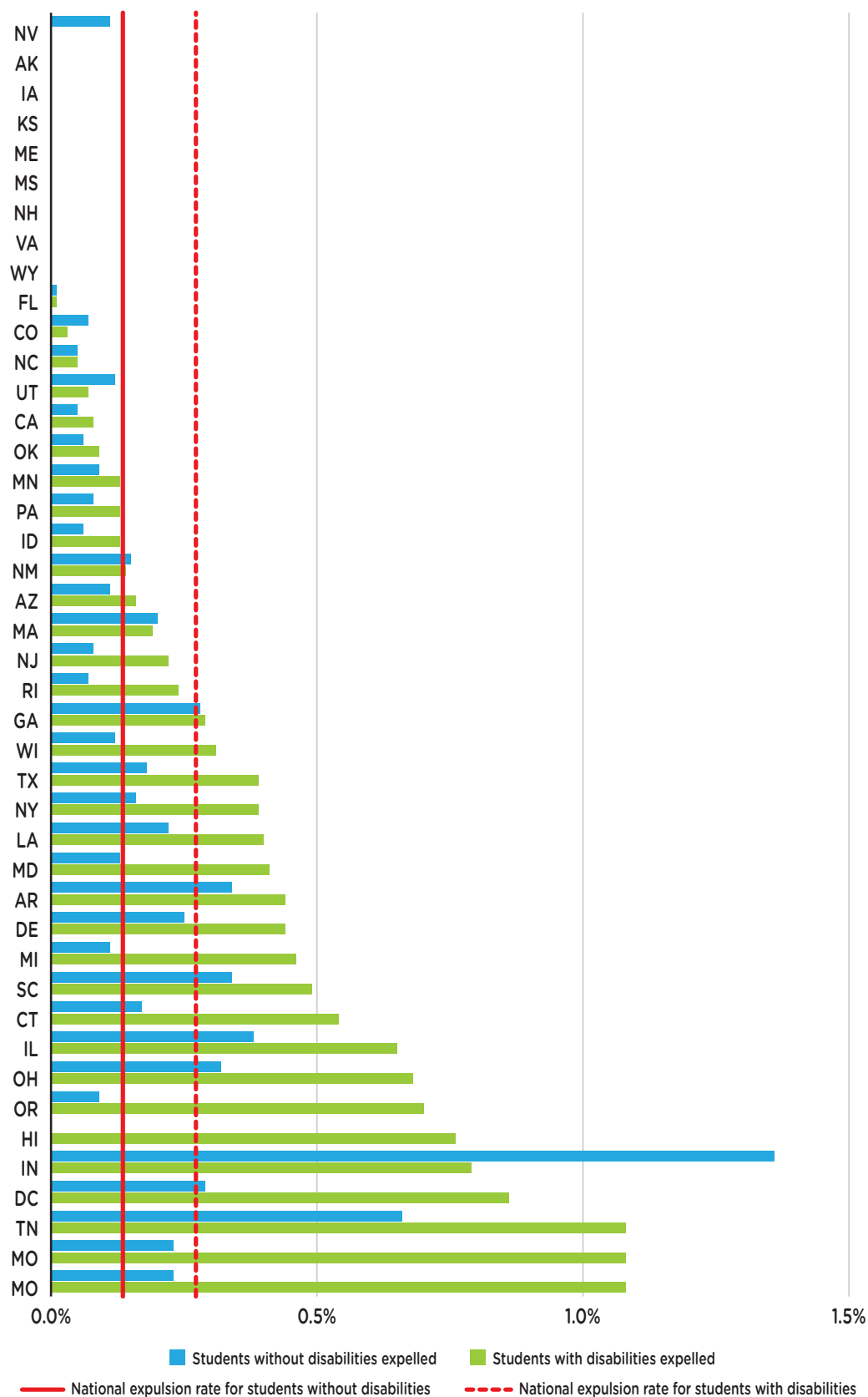


Figure A6. Percentage of Students in Charter Schools Expelled in 2015-2016, by Student Group and State

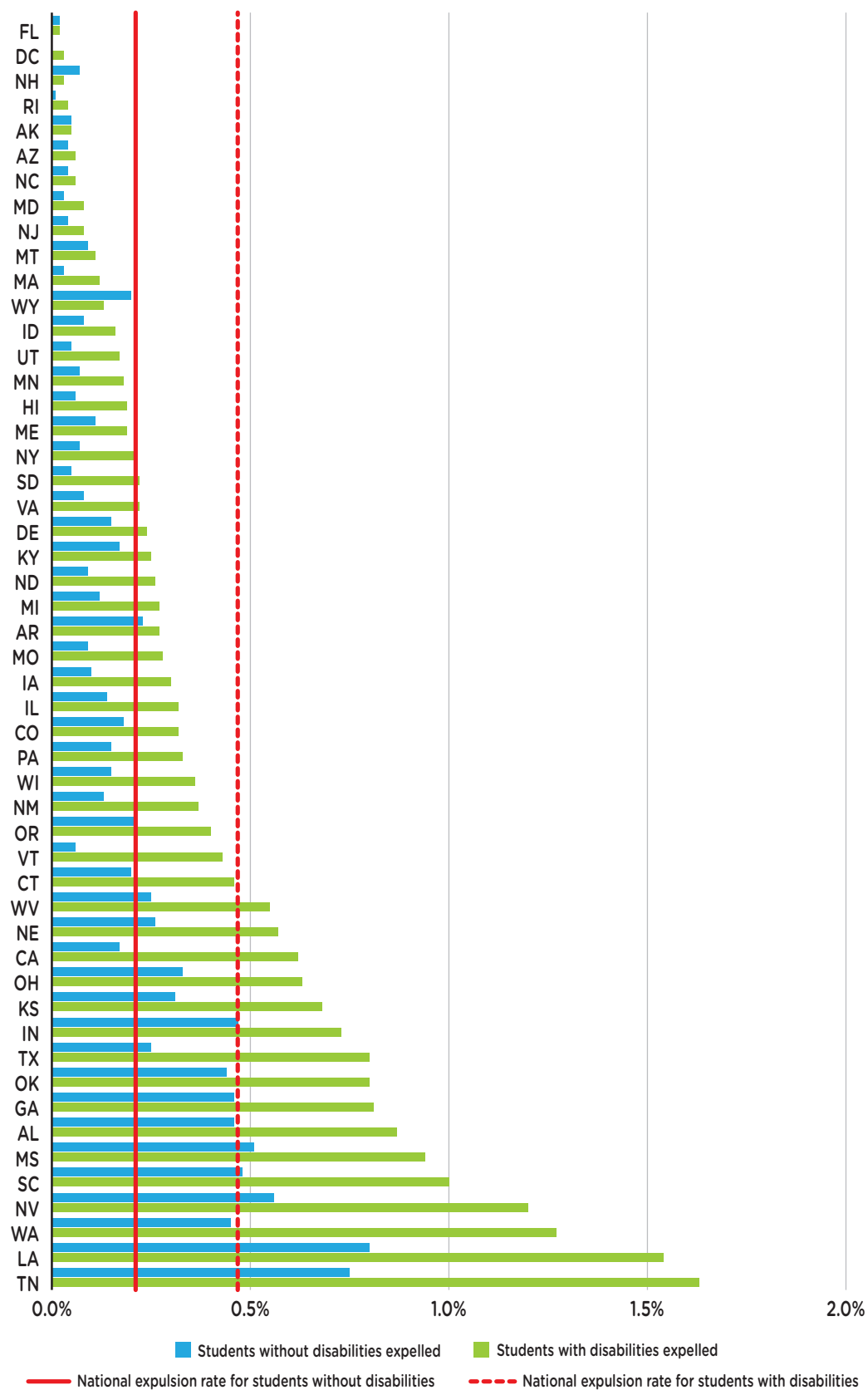


Figure A7. Percentage of Students in Traditional Public Schools Expelled in 2015–2016, by Student Group and State

Specialized Charter Schools

A specialized school is one that primarily or entirely focuses on serving students with either a particular disability or any disability. In order to identify schools that could be considered specialized, the following steps were used (Table A21).

Step 1. From the CRDC data, a subset of all schools that reported >=25% enrollment of students with disabilities was obtained.⁴⁷

Step 2. Of these data, schools that had self-identified as specialized were included in the list.

Step 3. Schools that did not self-identify as specialized but enrolled >= 50% students with disabilities were cross-checked with other databases and NCSECS’s own research. Comparisons were made to the 2013-14 CRDC data. Adjustments were made based on whether or not the status of schools had changed (e.g., a closure, verified as not specialized etc.).

Step 4. Schools that were included in the final list were further categorized by state and disability focus.

Table A21. Compiling a List of Specialized Charter Schools		
Source	% of Total Schools	# of Schools
Self-Identified List	4.29%	7
CRDC 13-14 List	31.29%	51
50% or More List	19.63%	32
Self-Identified List and 50%+	44.79%	73

Limitations

The analyses presented in this report have several limitations that must be acknowledged as follows:

1. The CRDC is self-reported and while we conducted a number of data validity checks, we did not comprehensively test the validity of all charter and traditional public school data. As a result, there remains a possibility that schools may have been incorrectly coded within the CRDC. Moreover, we observed instances of duplicate observations, in addition to instances where a single school categorized themselves as two separate entities (e.g. an elementary and middle school) when other sources (such as NCES) classified them as a single entity.
2. Missing data observed during the enrollment cleaning process was handled via complete case analysis (Pigott). Although complete case analysis is a standard method of dealing with missing data, where all observations with incomplete data are removed, it has two significant drawbacks:
 - The cleaned sample may yield biased results to the extent that missing data are not missing completely at random (MCAR). It is assumed that missing data is not MCAR because the CRDC is self-reported. Thus, it is unknown whether there exists a systematic pattern of missing data.
 - Requiring complete cases can result in removing a large percentage of the sample. Estimates may be biased if the complete observations used in the analyses differ systematically to the incomplete observations. This issue becomes compounded as more observations are removed from the population
 - Even though complete case analysis deletion often results in a significant decrease in the sample size available for the analyses, it can still be useful in estimating population parameters. If the number of missing cases is negligible, then it is reasonable to assume that the data could be MCAR. But, there is no way of discerning the relationship between the number of missing cases and whether they are MCAR. It is important to acknowledge that although over 89% of the original sample was maintained for each enrollment analysis, some degree of bias may have been introduced.

⁴⁷ The 25% figure came from choosing a number that was more than twice the national average enrollment of students with disabilities for charter schools (10.79%)

3. The CRDC did not contain any data identifying a charter school's legal status. As a result, we used several variables from the Common Core of Data (CCD) Local Education Agency Universe file to establish a criterion for determining legal status. It is important to note that determining charter legal status is difficult because of within-state and cross-state nuances. For instance, In California a charter school can be considered an independent LEA for fiscal purposes (all non-special education funding), but part of an LEA for special education purposes. It could also be an independent LEA for both purposes. Because a charter's legal status may differ depending on the criteria used, our criteria to assign legal status may not account for how states define charter legal status.
4. It is possible that the discipline rates provided in this report are biased. The sample of schools used for each discipline analysis vary as a result of differences in the amount of missing and/or not applicable values for each discipline category. We did not compare the enrollment characteristics of schools removed from each discipline analyses to the schools that remained. Because privacy protected data denote values of two or below, it is possible that the discipline rates are inflated if the schools removed from the analyses due to privacy protected values had larger enrollments relative to the schools remaining in the analysis.
5. Finally, the development of the list of specialized charter schools is cumulative in nature in that we are drawing from prior research and expanding and verifying the list based on schools that self-identify or enroll a disproportionately large percentage of students with disabilities (i.e., 50%) relative to the national average of 12%. Further limiting the development of the list is the practical reality that many of the schools do not maintain up to date or information-rich websites that facilitate ready verification of the school's existence or details regarding its mission.

Appendix B: References

- California Department of Education. (2018). Annual Performance Report Measures. Retrieved from: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/leadatarpts.asp>.
- Connecticut School Finance Project. (2016). Improving How Connecticut Funds Special Education. Retrieved from: <http://ctschoolfinance.org/assets/uploads/files/Improving-How-CT-Funds-Special-Education-FINAL.pdf>.
- DeArmond, M., et al., (2019). Seizing the Opportunity: Educating Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education & National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools. Retrieved online October 14, 2019 from: <https://www.crpe.org/publications/seizing-opportunity-educating-students-disabilities-charter-schools>.
- Gordon, N. (2017). *Race, poverty, and interpreting overrepresentation in special education*. Brookings Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/race-poverty-and-interpreting-overrepresentation-in-special-education/>.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States. London: Harvard University Press.
- Losen, D., Keith, M., Hodson, C., and Martinez, T. (2016, March). *Charter Schools, Civil Rights and School Discipline: A Comprehensive Review*. The Center for Civil Rights Remedies. Retrieved from: http://www.schooldisciplinedata.org/ccrr/docs/Charter_School_Report_2016.pdf.
- Molnar, A. (2019, May). *Virtual Schools in the U.S. 2019*. National Education Policy Center. Retrieved from: <https://nepc.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Virtual%20Schools%202019.pdf>.
- Morando Rhim, L. (2018, December 11). *Choice and Specialization Are Important Levers for Parents of Students with Disabilities* [Editorial]. The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncsecs.org/blog/2018/12/11/choice-and-specialization-are-important-levers-for-parents-of-students-with-disabilities>.
- Morando Rhim, L. & O'Neill, P. T. (2013). *Improving Access and Creating Exceptional Opportunities: Educating Students with Disabilities in the Charter Sector*. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from: http://www.publiccharters.org/sites/default/files/migrated/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Special-Education-in-Charter-Schools_20131021T154812.pdf.
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. *About Charter Schools*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.publiccharters.org/about-charter-schools>.
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. *Data Dashboard*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://data.publiccharters.org/>.
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2017, March 22). *Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Charter Public School Laws* (8th Edition). Retrieved from: https://www.publiccharters.org/sites/default/files/migrated/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MODEL-Report_FINAL.pdf.
- The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools. (2017). *Issue Brief: Legal Status—The Impact of LEA Status on Special Education in Charter Schools*. Retrieved from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52feb326e4b069fc72abb0c8/t/5995d789893fc09a8a3be1ca/1502992272544/EC+LEA+Status+Issue+Brief.pdf>.
- The National Council on Disability. (2018). *Charter Schools—Implications for Students with Disabilities*. Retrieved from: https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Charter-Schools.docx.
- The New York City Department of Education. (2007). *NYC DOE Protocol for SPED in Charter Schools*. Retrieved from: https://www.nyccharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/NYC_DOE_Protocols_for_SPED_in_Charter_Schools_o.pdf.
- Odom, S. L., Buysse, V., & Soukakou, E. (2011). Inclusion for Young Children With Disabilities: A Quarter Century of Research Perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 33(4), 344–356. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815111430094>.
- Pigott, T. D. (2001). A Review of Method for Missing Data. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 7, 353–383.
- Rosenthal, D. (2016). Denied. *Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved from: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/denied/>.
- Sullivan, A. L., & Bal, A. (2013). Disproportionality in Special Education: Effects of Individual and School Variables on Disability Risk. *Exceptional Children*, 79(4), 475–494. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440291307900406>.
- United States, Department of Education. (2016, December 12). *Fact Sheet: Equity in IDEA*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-equity-idea>.
- United States, Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. *2015–2016 Civil Rights Data Collection Public Use Data File User's Manual*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/2015-16-Public-Use-Data-File-Manual.pdf>.
- United States, Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. *About the Civil Rights Data Collection*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/AboutTheCRDC.pdf>.

- United States, Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015–2016 Data Notes*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/Data-Notes-2015-16-CRDC.pdf>.
- United States, Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs. (2018). *40th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2018/parts-b-c/40th-arc-for-idea.pdf>.
- United States, Government Accountability Office. (2019, April). *Report to Congressional Requesters: Special Education—Varied State Criteria May Contribute to Differences in Percentages of Children Served*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/698430.pdf>.
- United States, Government Accountability Office. (2012 June). *Report to Congressional Requesters: Charter Schools—Additional Federal Attention Needed to Help Protect Access for Students with Disabilities*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/600/591435.pdf>.
- United States, Government Accountability Office. (2013, February). *Report to the Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate: Individuals With Disabilities Education Act—Standards Needed to Improve Identification of Racial and Ethnic Overrepresentation in Special Education*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/660/652437.pdf>.
- United States, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). *Common Core of Data (CCD), “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey,” 2000–01 and 2016–17, Digest of Education Statistics, Table 216.30*.
- United States, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019, May). *The Condition of Education: Children and Youth with Disabilities*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp.
- Wehmeyer, M., & Schwartz, M. (2001). Disproportionate Representation of Males in Special Education Services: Biology, Behavior, or Bias? *Education and Treatment of Children*, 24(1), 28–45. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42899643>.

Appendix C: 2015–2016 List of Specialized Charter Schools

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Arizona Autism Charter School	Phoenix	AZ	Autism	K–9	104	N/A ¹	Independent Research by the Center’s Staff
Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence	Tampa	FL	Autism	PK–12	93	95%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Palm Beach School for Autism	Lake Worth	FL	Autism	PK–12	277	97%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Princeton House Charter	Orlando	FL	Autism	PK–5	155	94%	Self-Identified and 50%+
South Florida Autism Charter School Inc.	Hialeah	FL	Autism	K–12	178	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
The Hope Charter Center for Autism	Stuart	FL	Autism	PK–3	35	77%	Self-Identified and 50%+
The Learning Academy	Tampa	FL	Autism	9–12	103	97%	Self-Identified and 50%+
The Learning Center	Jupiter	FL	Autism	PK–8	119	91%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Tapestry Public Charter School	Doraville	GA	Autism	6–12	128	58%	50% or More
C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional Center	Bowie	MD	Autism	K–12	120	95%	Self-Identified and 50%+
James E. Duckworth Regional Center	Beltsville	MD	Autism	K–12	92	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Margaret Brent Regional Center	New Carrollton	MD	Autism	K–12	128	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Lionsgate Academy	Minnetonka	MN	Autism	7–12	123	93%	50% or More
Lionsgate Academy AIM	North St. Paul	MN	Autism	12, UG	38	76%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Rochester Beacon Academy	Rochester	MN	Autism	6–12	89	51%	50% or More
New York City Autism Charter School	NY	NY	Autism	K–12, UG	33	97%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Autism Model School	Toledo	OH	Autism	K–12	124	92%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Hope Academy for Autism	Warren	OH	Autism	K–12	69	91%	Self-Identified and 50%+

¹ Arizona Autism Charter School did not complete the CRDC survey.

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Oakstone Community School	Columbus	OH	Autism	K-12	246	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
The Autism Academy of Learning	Toledo	OH	Autism	K-12	56	88%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Spectrum Charter School	Monroeville	PA	Autism	PK-12, UG	34	79%	50% or More
The Foundation School for Autism	San Antonio	TX	Autism	PK-1	38	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Spectrum Academy – NSL	North Salt Lake	UT	Autism	K-12	569	82%	50% or More
Spectrum Academy – Pleasant Grove	Pleasant Grove	UT	Autism	K-11	460	86%	50% or More
Sequoia Deaf School	Mesa	AZ	Deaf, deaf blind, or hard-of-hearing	K-12	65	72%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Rocky Mountain Deaf School	Denver	CO	Deaf, deaf blind, or hard-of-hearing	PK-12	70	90%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Metro Deaf School	St. Paul	MN	Deaf, deaf blind, or hard-of-hearing	PK-12, UG	84	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Albuquerque Sign Language Academy	Albuquerque	NM	Deaf, deaf blind, or hard-of-hearing	K-10	99	53%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Achievement Academy	Lakeland	FL	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	156	97%	50% or More
Capstone Academy	Pensacola	FL	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	23	91%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Capstone Academy Milton Charter School	Milton	FL	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	30	90%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Frances Fuchs Early Childhood Center	Beltsville	MD	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	395	62%	50% or More
H. W. Wheatley Early Childhood Center	Capitol Heights	MD	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	388	65%	50% or More
Kenmoor Early Childhood Center	Landover	MD	Developmental delays/disabilities	PK	306	62%	50% or More
Northern Arizona Academy for Career Development – Taylor	Taylor	AZ	Emotional/behavioral needs	9-12	67	30%	CRDC 13-14
Ombudsman – Charter East II	Phoenix	AZ	Emotional/behavioral needs	9-12	88	26%	CRDC 13-14
Devereux Ackerman Academy	Kennesaw	GA	Emotional/behavioral needs	K-12	81	65%	CRDC 13-14

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Indianapolis Metropolitan High School	Indianapolis	IN	Emotional/behavioral needs	9–12+	265	28%	CRDC 13–14
Capstone Academy Charter School (SDA – South Campus)	Detroit	MI	Emotional/behavioral needs	7–12	78	62%	50% or More
Clara B. Ford Academy (SDA)	Dearborn Heights	MI	Emotional/behavioral needs	5–12	132	39%	CRDC 13–14
Lighthouse Academy - St. Johns	Grand Rapids	MI	Emotional/behavioral needs	3–12	30	53%	50% or More
John V. Lindsay Wildcat Academy Charter School	New York	NY	Emotional/behavioral needs	9–12	439	27%	CRDC 13–14
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School	Staten Island	NY	Emotional/behavioral needs	3–12	383	34%	CRDC 13–14
Brookwood Academy	Columbus	OH	Emotional/behavioral needs	4–12	122	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Lighthouse Community School, Inc.	Cincinnati	OH	Emotional/behavioral needs	7–12	62	79%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Tomorrow Center	Cardington	OH	Emotional/behavioral needs	6–12	76	50%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Dr. Robert Ketterer Charter School Inc.	Latrobe	PA	Emotional/behavioral needs	1–12	184	60%	CRDC 13–14
Depelchin – Richmond	Richmond	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	2–5	17	65%	CRDC 13–14
Helping Hand	Austin	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	K–8	21	38%	CRDC 13–14
John H. Wood Jr. Charter School at Afton Oaks	Fort Myers	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	K–12	130	52%	CRDC 13–14
John H. Wood Jr. Charter School at San Marcos	San Marcos	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	9–12	156	63%	CRDC 13–14
Ki Charter Academy	San Marcos	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	2–12	156	54%	50% or More
Orenda Charter School - Canyon Lakes	Lubbock	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	K–12	53	77%	CRDC 13–14
Orenda Charter School - Williams House	Lometa	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	2–12	32	25%	CRDC 13–14
Trinity Charter School	Canyon Lake	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	6–12	72	53%	CRDC 13–14
Trinity Charter School	Katy	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	6–12	82	56%	CRDC 13–14

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
University of Texas University Charter School – Settlement Home	Austin	TX	Emotional/behavioral needs	7–12	33	67%	CRDC 13–14
Kingsman Academy Public Charter School	Washington DC	Washington DC	Emotional/behavioral needs	6–12	267	57%	50% or More
The Einstein School Inc.	Gainesville	FL	Language-based disabilities	2–8	113	52%	50% or More
Louisiana Key Academy	Baton Rouge	LA	Language-based disabilities	1–7	233	16%	Self-Identified
Max Charter Alternative Education	Thibodaux	LA	Language-based disabilities	1–8	118	25%	CRDC 13–14
Arroyo Elementary School	Glendale	AZ	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	549	30%	CRDC 13–14
Pinnacle High School - Tempe	Tempe	AZ	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	65	35%	CRDC 13–14
Pinnacle Virtual High School	Tempe	AZ	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	376	56%	50% or More
Sweetwater School	Glendale	AZ	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	534	37%	CRDC 13–14
Sequoia Charter	Santa Clarita	CA	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	55	91%	CRDC 13–14
Woodland Star Charter	Sonoma	CA	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	251	59%	50% or More
Academy of Urban Learning	Denver	CO	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	156	26%	CRDC 13–14
Gateway Lab School	Wilmington	DE	Two or more IDEA Categories	3–8	211	63%	50% or More
Positive Outcomes Charter School	Camden	DE	Two or more IDEA Categories	7–12	127	69%	50% or More
Access Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	112	96%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Aspire Academy Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–5	108	44%	CRDC 13–14
Believers Academy	West Palm Beach	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	124	97%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Chautauqua Charter School	Panama City	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	12, UG	43	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Early Beginnings Academy Civic Center	Miami	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–2	149	99%	50% or More

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Easter Seals Child Development Center	Daytona Beach	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	30	83%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Ed Venture Charter School	Lantana	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	85	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Focus Academy	Temple Terrace	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	81	88%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Gulfstream Goodwill Academy	Boynton Beach	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	10–12, UG	81	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Montessori Academy of Early Enrichment, Inc.	Greenacres	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–5	198	46%	CRDC 13–14
Pepin Academies	Tampa	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	3–12	697	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Pepin Academies of Pasco County	New Port Riche	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	3–11	270	99%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Pepin Transitional School	Tampa	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	63	98%	CRDC 13–14
Potentials Charter School	Boca Raton	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–8	26	88%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Putnam Edge High School	Palatka	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	51	31%	CRDC 13–14
Seagull Academy	Riviera Beach	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	7–12	52	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
St. Johns Community Campus	St. Augustine	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	11–12, UG	30	90%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Therapeutic Learning Center	St. Augustine	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	19	95%	Self-Identified and 50%+
UCP Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–5	153	87%	50% or More
UCP East Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–5	267	61%	Self-Identified and 50%+
UCP Osceola Charter School	Kissimmee	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–3	95	83%	50% or More
UCP Osceola Child Development	Kissimmee	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	77	100%	CRDC 13–14
UCP Pine Hills Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–5	97	69%	50% or More
UCP Seminole Child Development	Lake Mary	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–3	109	81%	Self-Identified and 50%+

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
UCP Transitional Learning Academy High Charter	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	64	89%	Self-Identified and 50%+
UCP Transitional Learning Academy Middle School	Orlando	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–8	36	89%	CRDC 13–14
UCP West Orange Charter	Winter Garden	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–5	170	80%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Victory Ridge Academy	Lake Wales	FL	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–12, UG	233	100%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Another Choice Virtual Charter	Nampa	ID	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	413	30%	Self-Identified
Canaan Community Academy	Canaan	IN	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	80	40%	CRDC 13–14
Damar Charter Academy	Indianapolis	IN	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	166	98%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Options Charter School – Carmel	Carmel	IN	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	168	26%	CRDC 13–14
Rural Community Academy	Graysville	IN	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	152	31%	CRDC 13–14
Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School	Lowell	MA	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	103	37%	CRDC 13–14
Chapel Forge Early Childhood Center	Bowie	MD	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK	253	78%	50% or More
Minnesota Internship Center – Downtown Campus	Minneapolis	MN	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	65	54%	CRDC 13–14
Northern Lights Community School	Warba	MN	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	109	46%	Independent Research by the Center’s Staff
Schoolcraft Learning Community	Bemidji	MN	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	184	29%	Self-Identified
Spero Academy	Minneapolis	MN	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–6	86	87%	50% or More
Jefferson Montessori	Carlsbad	NM	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	186	30%	CRDC 13–14
Robert F. Kennedy High Charter School	Albuquerque	NM	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	222	27%	CRDC 13–14
Broome Street Academy Charter High School	Orange	NY	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	271	33%	CRDC 13–14
Opportunity Charter School	NY	NY	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–12	475	53%	50% or More

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Constellation Schools: Outreach Academy for Students with Disabilities	Cleveland	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-UG	31	90%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Foxfire Intermediate School	Zanesville	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-8	118	52%	50% or More
Ridgedale Community School	Morral	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	33	42%	Self-Identified
Steel Academy	Akron	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	137	66%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Akron Elementary School	Akron	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-6	143	69%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Akron Middle School	Akron	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-8	41	68%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Alternative Learners Warren Middle & Secondary	Warren	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	7-12	108	89%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	121	56%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Dayton	Dayton	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	136	71%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Painesville	Painesville	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	76	72%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School Alternative Learners - Xenia	Xenia	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-9	161	75%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School Alternative Learners - Lorain	Lorain	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-5	139	68%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners - Canton	Canton	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	155	68%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Columbus	Columbus	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-5	44	43%	Self-Identified
Summit Academy Community School - Parma	Parma	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	199	79%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Toledo	Toledo	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-8	110	71%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Community School - Warren	Warren	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-6	109	65%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Middle School - Columbus	Columbus	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-8	109	45%	Self-Identified

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Summit Academy Middle School - Lorain	Lorain	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–8	91	84%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Secondary - Akron	Akron	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	64	63%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Secondary - Canton	Canton	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	115	65%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Secondary - Lorain	Lorain	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	85	86%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Secondary - Youngstown	Youngstown	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	8–12	250	70%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Secondary School - Middletown	Middletown	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	7–12	89	76%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Toledo Learning Center	Toledo	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	190	74%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Transition High School Dayton	Dayton	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	122	68%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Transition High School – Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	86	71%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Academy Transition High School – Columbus	Columbus	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	9–12	229	38%	Self-Identified
Summit Academy – Youngstown	Youngstown	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–7	208	68%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Summit Acady Comm School for Alternative Learners of Middletown	Middletown	OH	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–6	91	52%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Eola Hills Charter School	Amity	OR	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–8	44	39%	CRDC 13–14
Oregon Virtual Academy	North Bend	OR	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	1678	34%	CRDC 13–14
Meyer Center for Special Children	Greenville	SC	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK–K	52	90%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Palmetto Youth Academy Charter	Kingstree	SC	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–6	17	55%	CRDC 13–14
Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education	North Charleston	SC	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12, UG	36	94%	Self-Identified and 50%+
Humes Preparatory Upper Academy	Memphis	TN	Two or more IDEA Categories	6–8	371	26%	CRDC 13–14
Big Springs Charter School	Leakey	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	K–12	90	29%	CRDC 13–14

School Name	City	State	Focus	Grades Served	Enrollment	Enrollment of Students with Disabilities	Source
Hill Country Youth Ranch	Ingram	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	84	60%	50% or More
New Horizons	Abilene	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	1-11	52	50%	50% or More
Ranch Academy - Tyler Campus	Canton	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-12	38	74%	CRDC 13-14
School of Excellence in Education – Rick Hawkins High School	San Antonio	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-12	80	25%	CRDC 13-14
Tnc Campus (Texas Neurorehabilitation Center)	Austin	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	59	78%	50% or More
Trinity Charter School - Pegasus	Lockhart	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	3-12	180	26%	CRDC 13-14
University of Texas University Charter School - Pathfinder Camp	Driftwood	TX	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-11	17	41%	CRDC 13-14
Pinnacle Canyon Academy	Price	UT	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-12	522	26%	CRDC 13-14
Albemarle County Community Public Charter	Charlottesville	VA	Two or more IDEA Categories	6-8	43	26%	CRDC 13-14
Richmond Career Education & Employment (Charter School)	Richmond	VA	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	28	96%	50% or More
Bridges Public Charter School	Washington, D.C.	Washington, D.C.	Two or more IDEA Categories	P-5	212	26%	CRDC 13-14
Monument Academy	Washington, D.C.	Washington, D.C.	Two or more IDEA Categories	5-8	40	50%	50% or More
St. Coletta of Greater Washington	Washington, D.C.	Washington, D.C.	Two or more IDEA Categories	PK-12, UG	249	99%	Self-Identified and 50%+
School for Early Development and Achievement (SEDA)	Milwaukee	WI	Two or more IDEA Categories	K-2	82	32%	CRDC 13-14
Sheboygan Area School District – Central High	Sheboygan	WI	Two or more IDEA Categories	9-12	210	27%	CRDC 13-14



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
SPECIAL EDUCATION



IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

NCSECS.ORG

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools