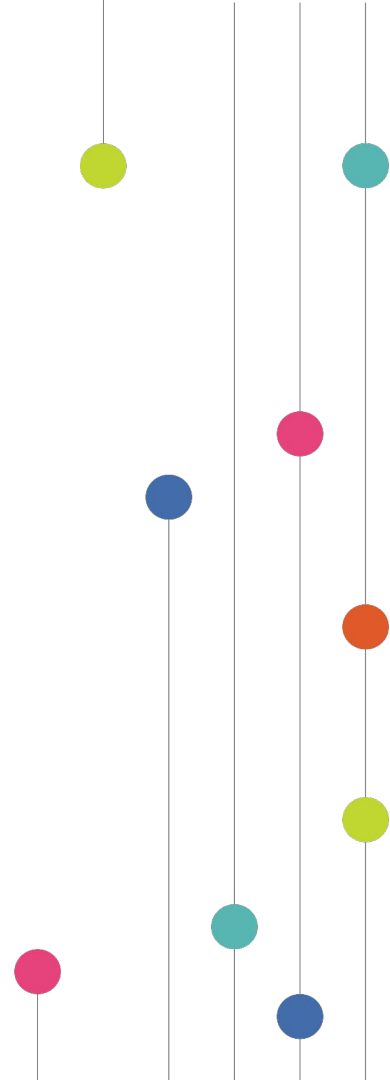


# Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism 2022-2023

*A February 2024 analysis of publicly available Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) data for the 2022-2023 school year*



Every Child. Every Neighborhood.



# Introduction

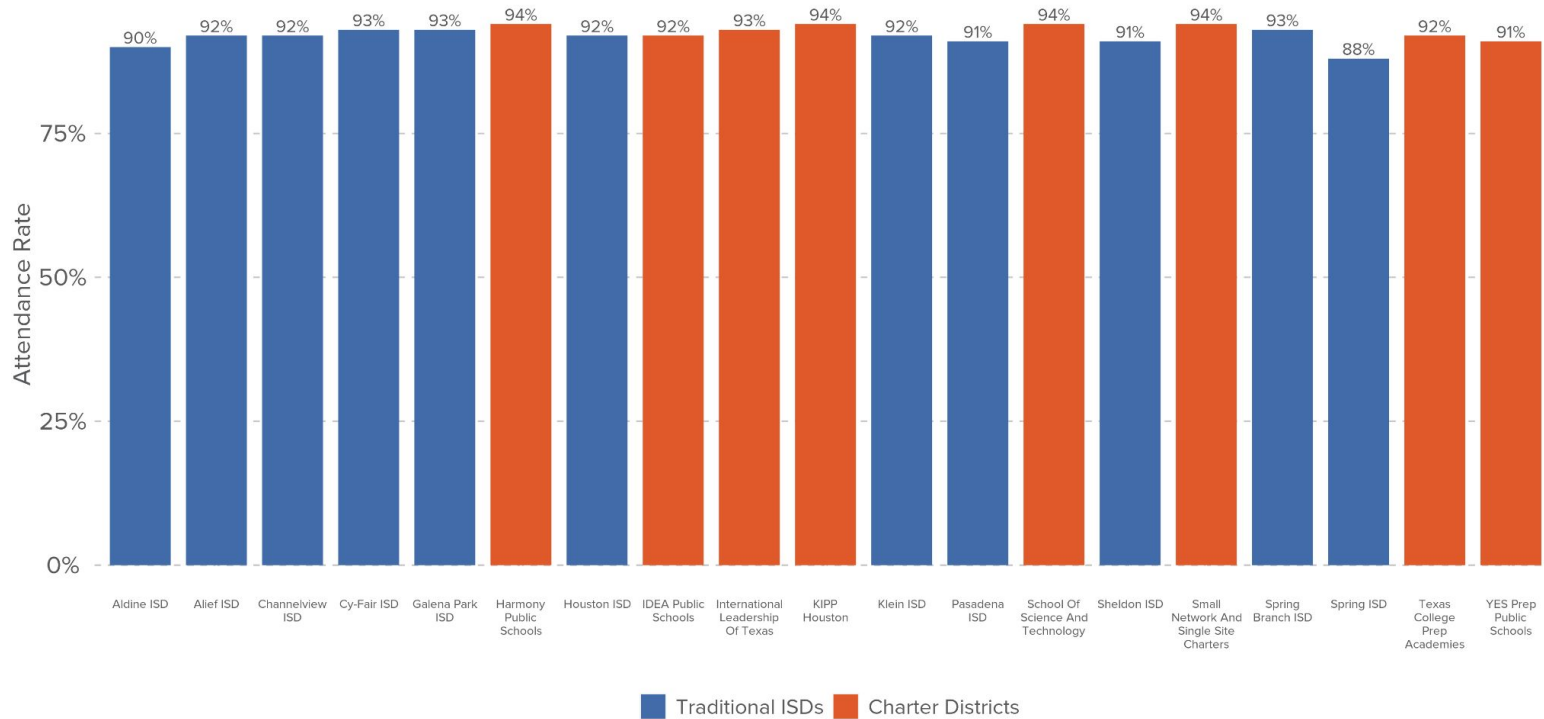
- In Texas, **school funding is tied to “average daily attendance” (ADA)** — the more students are present in a district on a daily basis, on average, the more funding they receive. So, districts are directly incentivized to prioritize increasing attendance among enrolled students.
- In addition to measuring average attendance, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) also tracks the proportion of students it considers to be **“chronically absent.”** To be classified as chronically absent, a student must:
  - Be **enrolled for 10+ days** in a given school year, and
  - Be **absent for 10% or more of days** in the school year.
- **“Chronic absenteeism rates”** represent the proportion of a school’s or district’s enrolled students who meet these criteria. Chronic absenteeism rates are only publicly available going back to the 2019-2020 school year.
- **Many factors might drive students to be chronically absent,** and not all student groups are equally affected. The US Dept. of Education has said that, “the reasons for chronic absenteeism are as varied as the challenges our students and families face—including poor health, limited transportation, and a lack of safety — which can be particularly acute in disadvantaged communities and areas of poverty.”

# Key Findings

- Overall **attendance rates in Houston-region districts are high** – typically over 90% – but there is **still room for growth** to maximize ADA funding.
- **Chronic absenteeism** in Houston-region ISDs and charter networks has **increased dramatically since 2020**, showing that a growing proportion of students are missing 10% or more of possible school days.
  - This alarming rise in chronic absenteeism matches a **national trend** and has important implications for student achievement and other outcomes, since being in school consistently is a critical component of academic success.
- Across many Houston-region districts, **Black students tend to be the group with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism**, whereas Asian students have the lowest rates.

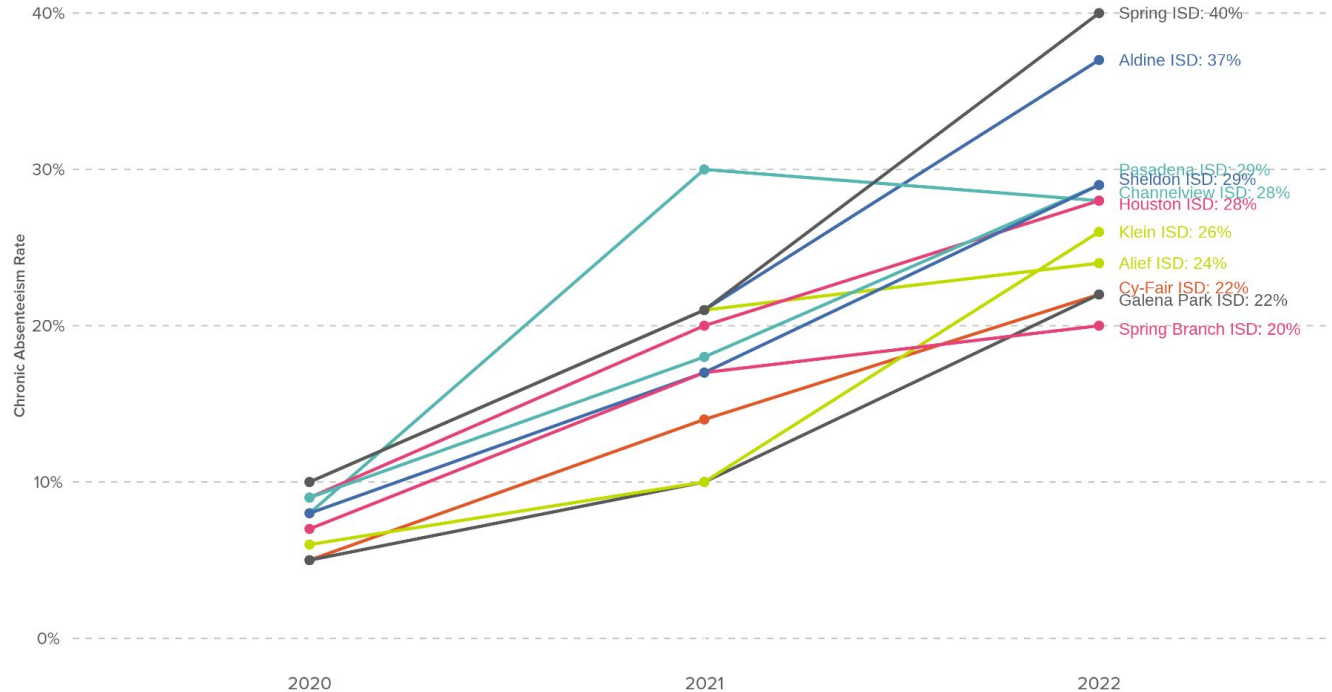
# Houston-region districts tend to have high attendance rates overall, but no district has over 95% daily attendance rates on average.

Attendance Rates in Houston-Region Districts, 2022



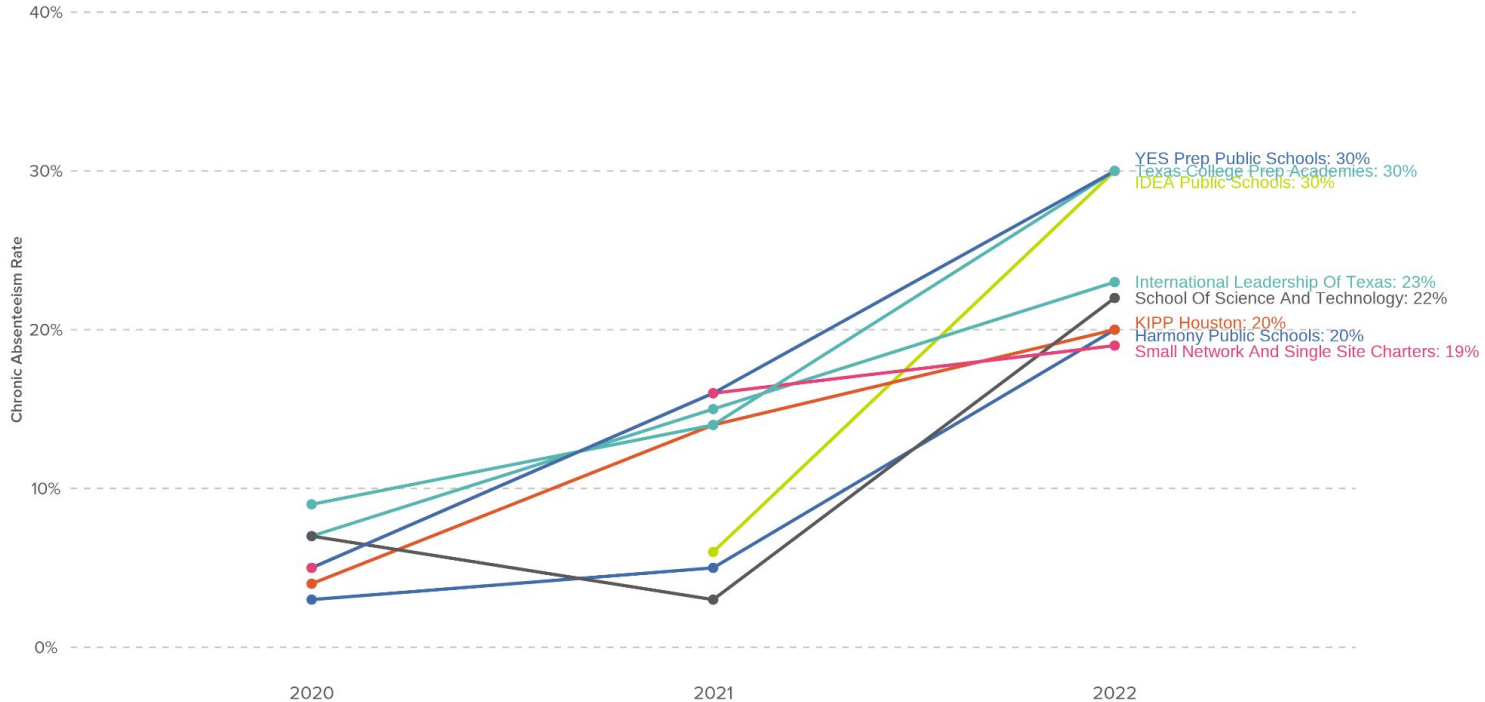
# Despite high attendance rates, chronic absenteeism has grown significantly since 2020, with as many as 4-in-10 students considered chronically absent in 2022.

Percent of Enrolled Students Chronically Absent in Houston-Region ISDs, 2020-2022



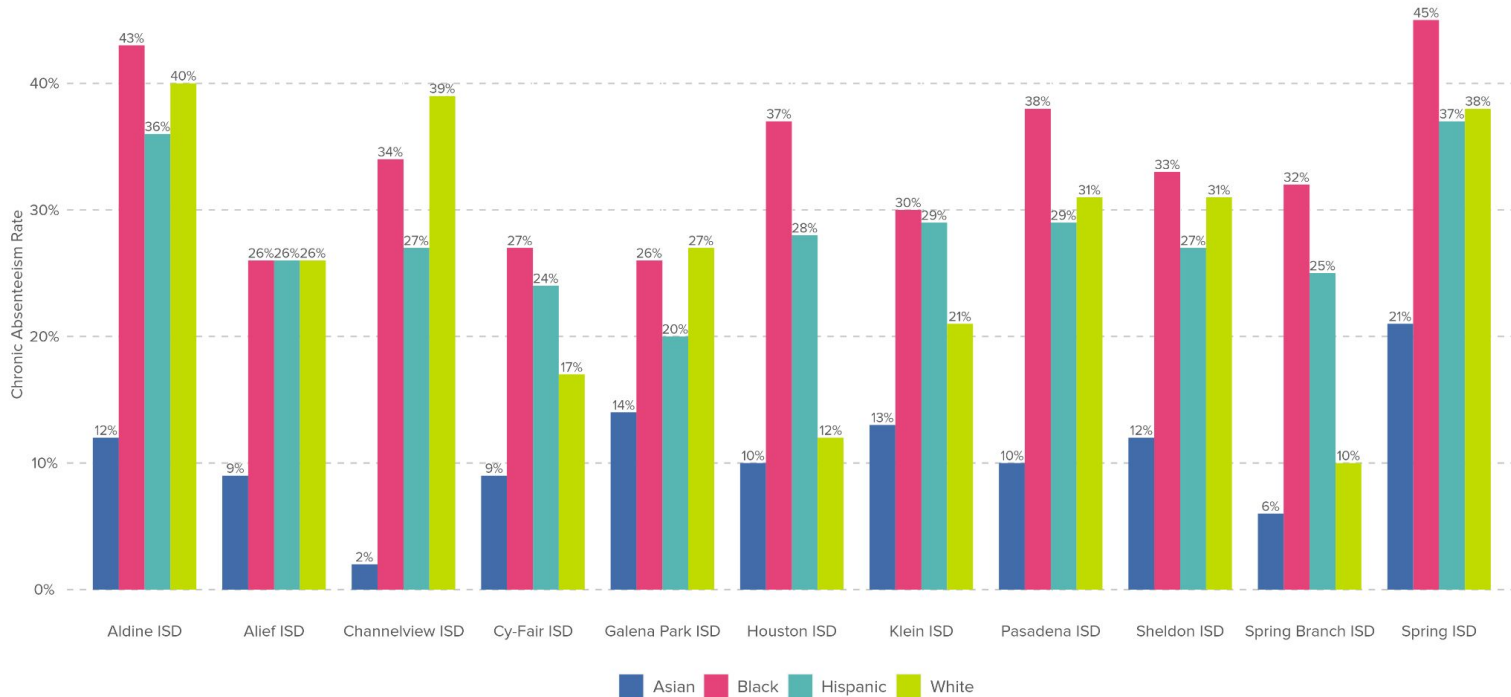
# Charter districts have also seen high growth in chronic absenteeism, with some experiencing a three-fold increase from 2020 to 2022.

Percent of Enrolled Students Chronically Absent in Houston-Region Charter Districts, 2020-2022



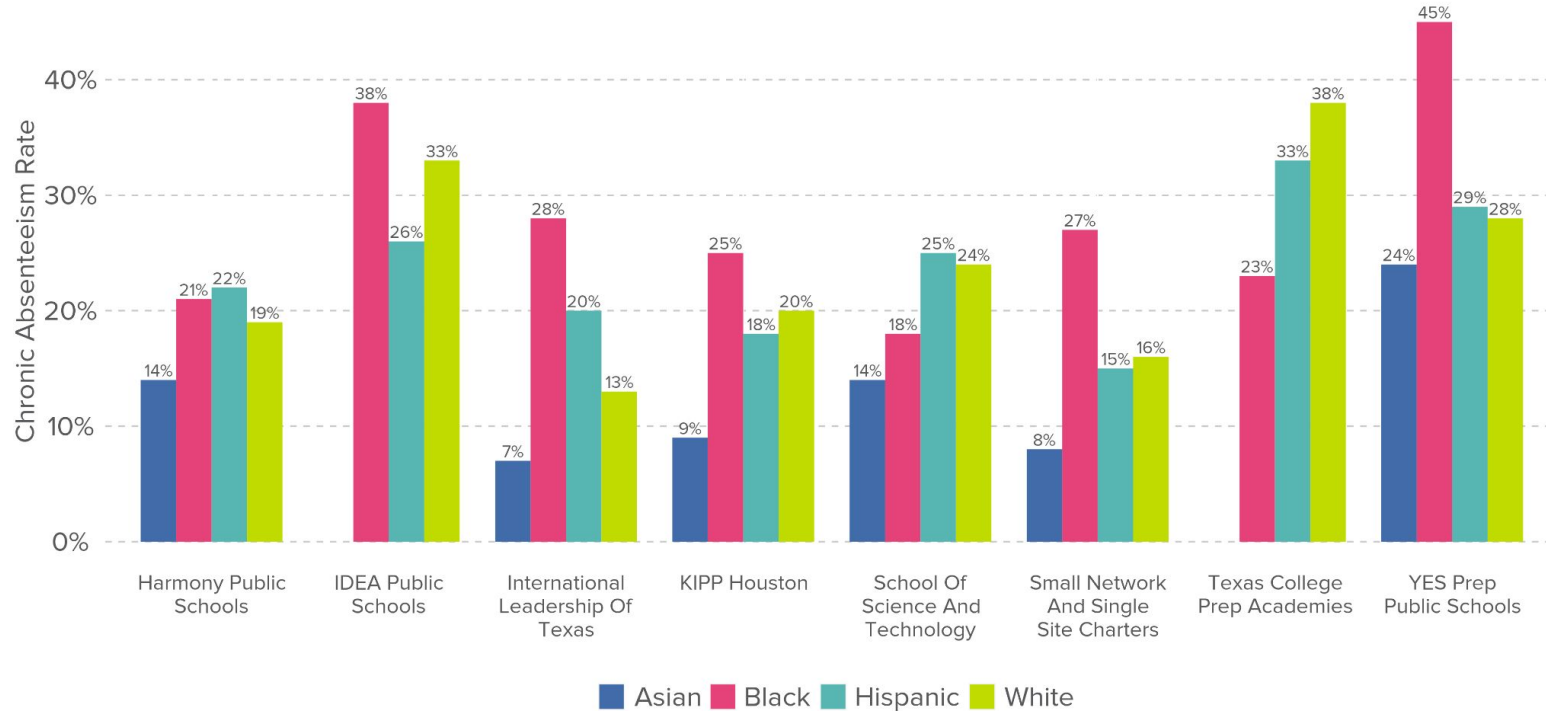
# Chronic absenteeism varied greatly across student groups in Houston-region ISDs, with Black students generally being the most likely group to be considered chronically absent and Asian students the least likely.

Chronic Absenteeism by Race & Ethnicity in Houston-Region ISDs, 2022



# Chronic absenteeism also varied by student group in charter districts, although the gaps between groups were smaller than in ISDs.

## Chronic Absenteeism by Race & Ethnicity in Houston-Region Charter Districts, 2022





# Implications and Takeaways

- **Being in school is a critical component of academic success.** A National Center for Education Statistics [report](#) found that low attendance was a key predictor of academic challenges and high school dropout.
- In addition to the benefits to students of being in school every day, schools are directly incentivized via Texas' average daily attendance (ADA) funding system to ensure students are in class consistently. Despite relatively high attendance rates, there is still **room for growth in many Houston-area districts to maximize their ADA funding.**
  - For a district with an enrollment of 50,000 students, increasing their attendance rate from 90% to 95% would result in at least an additional \$15.4 million in [basic allotment](#) ADA funding.
- Targeting the **rapidly growing population of chronically absent students** may be a place for districts to start. Legislators should study the causes of chronic absenteeism and the reasons behind its significant increase in recent years to identify state- and local-level policy solutions.
- This issue is **particularly urgent for Black students in the Houston region.** Legislators and districts should **prioritize studying the causes for chronic absenteeism** for these students to identify policy solutions and ways to support Black students and families to remove barriers to attendance.
- In addition, legislators should consider adding “chronically absent” to the **state’s definition of students classified as “educationally at-risk”** to allow districts access to additional resources that can be used for interventions intended to directly support chronically absent students.