

# ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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## UNEQUAL ACCESS

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July 31, 2016

### ***How Some California Charter Schools Illegally Restrict Enrollment***

All across California, charter schools are implementing admissions policies that exclude students from enrolling. Like other public schools, charters must admit *all* students who wish to attend. By law, they may not discourage certain students from enrolling based on income, national origin, academic performance or other factors. These admission policies threaten to turn public schooling into a two-tier system where the students who need the most resources receive the fewest.

To realize charter schools' promise of providing educational choice to all, the ACLU SoCal and Public Advocates released "Unequal Access: How Some California Charter Schools Illegal Restrict Enrollment," a July 2016 report that sheds light on exclusionary enrollment policies at 253 charter schools. *See map of charter schools cited* ([https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1IyKZ-1YhS\\_G6j2XKxVxmiJ8lfes&usp=sharing](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1IyKZ-1YhS_G6j2XKxVxmiJ8lfes&usp=sharing)).

These charter schools post enrollment policies or forms online that are clearly illegal or exclusionary. Other schools may also maintain similar prohibited policies that are hidden from the public view. The violations we found include:

- Exclusion Based on Academic Performance
- Discrimination against English Learners

- Pre-Enrollment Essays or Interviews
- Requirements that Discourage Undocumented Students
- Illegal Parent/Guardian Volunteer Requirements

See the [methodology \(https://www.aclusocal.org/en/unequal-access-methodology\)](https://www.aclusocal.org/en/unequal-access-methodology) for the report.

UPDATE April 25, 2017

[Read our followup brief after 119 schools on the list complied and changed their policies. \(https://www.aclusocal.org/en/making-progress-towards-even-playing-field\)](https://www.aclusocal.org/en/making-progress-towards-even-playing-field)