

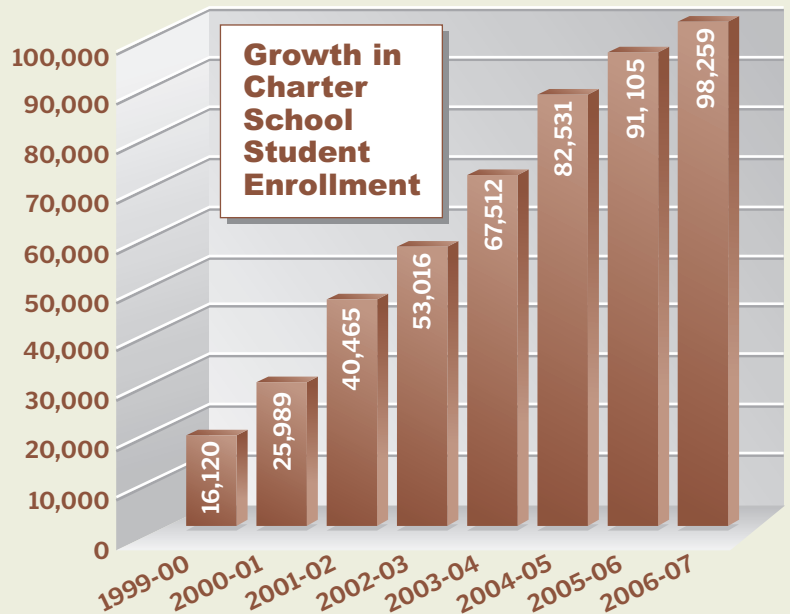
Florida's Public Charter Schools: 2007 Fact Sheet



What is a Public Charter School?

Charter schools are independent public schools that operate with increased flexibility and stronger accountability.

Public charter schools have been an integral part of Florida's public education system for ten years.



Florida is the second largest charter school state in the nation in terms of student enrollment.

Charter School FACTS

- Charter schools are tuition-free public schools with certified teachers.
- Students in charter schools must take the FCAT and are subject to the federal No Child Left Behind Act
- Charter schools are run by independent governing boards who serve a broad diversity of students
- Although charter schools are public schools and are funded with public tax dollars, they receive 60-80% of what school districts actually spend on a per-pupil basis
- 42 of Florida's 67 counties now have charter schools

There are currently more than 98,000 students enrolled in 355 public charter schools in Florida.



FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
of PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

1607 Village Square Boulevard, Suite 7 • Tallahassee, FL 32309
Phone: 850-222-9595 • Fax: 850-222-9593
www.floridacharterschools.org

Florida's Public Charter Schools: 2007 Fact Sheet



CHARTER SCHOOLS IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STATEWIDE

Improvement for All

National research shows that competition from charter schools has accompanied a rising tide of academic achievement for all public school students.¹

During the past five years, the percentage of students proficient in reading in Florida's public charter schools has increased at a faster pace than at the traditional public schools. Charter schools in Florida now have a slight edge statewide in the percentage of students passing reading in elementary schools, and math and reading in middle schools.

Narrowing the Achievement Gap

Research shows that charter schools are narrowing the achievement gap for low income and minority students nationally. Florida's charter schools are producing some of the nation's best results in this area.²

The African-American student population at charter schools is more proficient in reading and math than the African-American student population at traditional public schools. From 2002 to 2006, the achievement gap between non-minority and African-American students decreased from 30% to 23% in Florida charter schools. In Broward County, the percentage of African-American students testing proficient in reading at the charter schools has increased at a faster rate than at the non-charter schools. This has resulted in a significant narrowing of the achievement gap in the county.

¹ Caroline M. Hoxby, *School Choice and School Productivity (or Could School Choice be a Tide that Lifts All Boats?)*, National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2002.

² *The Decade of Progress* report released by the Florida Department of Education in November 2006

³ *How Florida Parents Grade Their Charter Schools: Views from the Grassroots*, Lewis Solmon and Judith Wiederhorn, Human Resources Policy Corporation; Judith Rippner, Charter School Accountability Center, Florida State University; Fall, 2003.

Hispanic students in the state's charter schools have almost

entirely eliminated the achievement gap between themselves and non-minority students. The Hispanic student population at charter schools is more proficient in reading and math than the Hispanic student population at traditional public schools.



Charter Schools Offer Parents Choice

Student enrollment in charter schools has increased dramatically over the last 10 years, demonstrating that more and more parents are making the choice to send their children to a public charter school. Parents also give charter schools high marks for strong academics, teacher quality, and parental involvement. In a 2003 survey of more than 6,000 charter school parents in Florida, nearly 70% gave their children's school an "A" or "A+."³

Charter Schools Are Accountable

A public charter school has little chance of surviving if it does not provide a satisfactory education — because parents will enroll their children elsewhere. This level of accountability and transparency guarantees that only the highest performing public charter schools remain open to serve the community.

Law Requires Charter Schools to Fulfill Four Purposes [Section 1002.33 (2) (b), F.S.]

- Improve student learning and academic achievement
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on low-performing students and reading
- Encourage the use of innovative learning methods
- Require the measurement of learning outcomes