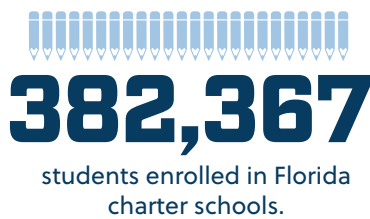




Florida's Public Charter Schools

Growing in Number and Popularity throughout the State

Florida's charter schools continue to see robust growth in student enrollment, proof that Florida families want and need charter schools in their communities. Florida's charter schools offer a wide variety of learning environments to meet students' academic needs and interests.



Charter school enrollment represents

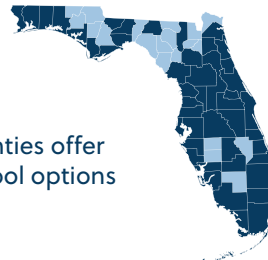
13.3%

of the total K-12 public school enrollment.



47

Florida counties offer charter school options to parents.



What are public charter schools?

Charter schools are non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations that have a contract or charter to provide the same educational services to students as district public schools.

Charter schools are nonsectarian public schools that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools.

Charter schools must hire certified teachers and students must take all Florida statewide assessments, just like traditional district schools.

How are charter schools funded?

Charter schools receive funding from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) using the same FTE formula applied to district schools. Charter schools must pay an administrative fee to their district sponsors of up to 5% of their total FTE funding.

A HISTORY OF OUTPERFORMING TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Florida Department of Education has measured the academic performance of students attending public charter schools for many years. These reports have shown that year after year, public charter school students outperform traditional public school students in most grade levels and in most academic subjects. Charter schools also do a better job overall in closing the achievement gap between White and Black students and White and Hispanic students.

**Florida Department of Education, Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison of the Performance of Charter School Students with Traditional Public School Students.*

Florida Statutes and Rules addressing Charter Schools:

- s. 1002.33, Charter schools
- s. 1013.62, Charter schools capital outlay funding
- s. 218.39(1), Annual financial audit reports

State Board of Education Rule 6A.6.0784, Charter School Governance Training

Myths Versus Facts about Charter Schools

MYTH: Charter schools are private schools.

FACT: Charter schools are NOT private schools.

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that are part of the state's public education system. They operate under performance contracts (charters) issued by the local public school districts. They are funded by the Florida legislature in the same manner as traditional public schools.

MYTH: Charter schools are for profit entities run by big corporations.

FACT: By law, Florida charter schools must be organized as nonprofit organizations governed by volunteer community-based boards of directors.

About 30 percent of the charter schools in Florida contract with charter management companies for back-office services but they still operate as nonprofits under the governance of a volunteer board of directors.

MYTH: Charter schools have little or no oversight.

FACT: This is completely false.

Charter schools are closely monitored by their district sponsors and the state. They are required to file several reports a year detailing their financial and operational status. Charter school students take the same state assessments as students in traditional public schools. Charter schools are evaluated and assigned a school grade using the same standards and criteria as traditional public schools. Public charter schools excel in closing the achievement gap among White and Black students and White and Hispanic students.

If a charter school receives two consecutive school grades of "F," the district sponsor has the authority to close the school. No traditional public school operated by a Florida school district has ever been closed for poor performance. (Since 1997, 320 charter schools have been closed.)

MYTH: Charter schools siphon money from school districts.

FACT: Charter schools serve the same public school students who would otherwise be enrolled in their assigned district schools.

We believe that educational funding should be used for the benefit of students, whether they attend a district school or a charter school. In fact, charter schools successfully serve public school students with less overall funding than traditional public schools.

MYTH: Charter schools cherry pick only the best students.

FACT: Parents are the ones who choose charter schools for their children, not the other way around.

Charter schools are open to all students residing within the district. When the number of applications exceeds the school's capacity, charter schools utilize a random drawing process, or lottery, to ensure all students have an equal chance for admission.

About the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools

FCPCS is the voice of the Florida charter school movement, with more than 400 charter school members. It is one of the oldest and largest charter school membership associations in the nation. Founded in 1999 by a grassroots group of charter school operators, it provides advocacy, support, resources, and networking opportunities to new and existing charter schools, parents, teachers and students. FCPCS also promotes the establishment and operation of high quality public charter schools throughout the state.

