



# 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.

### 739

charter schools are now operating in Florida.



### 29

 new charter schools

opened in **15** counties in 2023-24.



### 396,522

students enrolled in Florida charter schools in the 2023-24 school year.

An increase of

### 14,155

charter school students.



Charter school enrollment represents

### 13.8%

of the total K-12 public school enrollment.



### 48

Florida counties offer charter school options to parents.



### 69%

 of charter schools earned a school grade of

or



in 2024.

### A HISTORY OF OUTPERFORMING TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Annually, the Florida Department of Education measures the academic performance of students attending public charter schools. The data show, almost consistently, that public charter school students outperform traditional public school students in most grade levels and most academic subjects. Charter schools are also closing the achievement gap of Black and Hispanic students in reading and math.

Source: 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, 2022.

### What are public charter schools?

Charter schools are nonprofit corporations that operate under a performance contract, or charter, to provide innovative learning opportunities and increase parental choice while meeting high standards of student achievement.

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

Charter school teachers must be certified by the Florida Department of Education in the same manner as traditional public school teachers.

Charter school students must take all Florida statewide assessments, like their district school peers.

### 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.

### Florida Statutes and Rules addressing Charter Schools:

- s. 1002.33, Charter schools
- s. 1002.331, High performing 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





# 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) with their local school district. Charter schools 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, all Florida charter schools must be organized as nonprofit corporations and governed by volunteer community-based boards of directors.**

According to a 2020 study, nearly 60 percent of Florida's charter schools operate independently and under the direction of a local, autonomous governing board. Although the other 40 percent contracts with charter management companies for back-office services, they still operate as nonprofit organizations governed by a volunteer board of directors consistent with Florida law.

**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 must file monthly or quarterly financial reports, an annual financial audit conducted by an independent auditor (which is submitted to the Florida Auditor General), and an annual state mandated financial and operational review. Charter school students take the same statewide assessments as their traditional public school counterparts and they are evaluated and receive a school grade using the same standards and criteria as traditional public schools. Florida's public charter schools are outpacing district-run schools and continue to close the achievement gap among minority and underserved populations.

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.

**MYTH: Charter schools siphon money from school districts.**

**FACT: Charter schools successfully serve Florida students with less funding than traditional public 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 serve the same public school students who would otherwise be enrolled in their assigned district school but do so with less public funding.

**MYTH: Charter schools cherry pick only the best students.**

**FACT: Parents choose to enroll their children in charter schools, not the other way around.**

Charter schools are open to all students residing within the district. If the number of students applying exceeds the school's capacity, Florida statute requires that the charter school hold a random drawing or lottery to ensure all students have an equal chance for admission.

## About the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools

The Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools (FCPCS) is the leading charter school membership association in the state. Since its inception in 1999, FCPCS has been dedicated to creating a national model of high-quality, accredited public charter schools that are student-centered and performance-driven. FCPCS provides a wide array of technical support, mentoring, training, networking, and purchasing services to its membership, as well as serving as an advocate for all Florida public charter schools.

