



# KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT FLORIDA'S CHARTER SCHOOLS - 2016

## CHARTER SCHOOLS BY THE NUMBERS

**646**

Schools  
operating

**270,691**

Students  
enrolled

**46**

Florida  
counties  
where charter  
schools  
operate

**1997**

The year the  
first Florida  
charter school  
opened in  
Miami.

**9.7**

Percentage  
of Florida's  
public school  
students  
attending  
charter schools.

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

### How Charter Schools Are Funded

Charter schools receive funding from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) using the same FTE formula applied to district schools. Charter schools must also pay an administrative fee to their district sponsors, which cannot exceed 5% of their total FTE funding.

### Who Sponsors Charter Schools?

In Florida, district school boards are authorized to sponsor charter schools in the county over which the school board has jurisdiction. In addition, a state university may grant a charter to a lab school and serve as the school's sponsor.

### Students Attending Florida's Charter Schools

Many types of students attend Florida's charter schools, reflecting the communities where they operate. In 2014-15, 34% of charter school students were white, 66% of charter school students were minority students, including 39% Hispanic and 22% African-American students.

### Can charter schools hand-pick their students?

Charter schools must be open to any student covered in an inter-district agreement or residing in the school district in which the charter school is located, including students with special needs. New students are selected by random lottery.

A charter school may target students within specific age groups or grade levels, students considered at risk of dropping out of school or academic failure, or students enrolling in a charter school-in-a-municipality or a charter school-in-the-workplace.

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## Who Can Start a Charter School?

Charter schools can be formed by creating a new school or by converting an existing public school to a charter school. An individual, teachers, parents, a group of individuals, a municipality, or a legal entity may create a charter school.

## How Charter Schools are Held Accountable

Every charter school must be evaluated on academic progress and the outcomes agreed upon in the school's binding contract. In addition, individual schools are evaluated and assigned a school grade using the same standards and criteria as traditional public schools.

Charter schools must provide monthly and annual financial reports to their district sponsor and the state.

## Charter School Closures

If a charter school receives two consecutive grades of "F" the district sponsor may close the school. Since 1997, 316 charter schools have been closed, some voluntarily, for academic and/or financial reasons. No district public school in Florida has ever been closed for poor performance.

## Why Charter Schools are Popular among Florida Families

Charter schools offer families a welcome choice of public school options that was simply not available before charter schools existed. A family can choose to enroll their child in any charter school in their district. They are not limited by district geographic restrictions.

Parents often find that charter schools provide more individual attention to their child's learning needs and/or a special thematic emphasis that is not available in their assigned district school.

Since charter schools are financially dependent on income generated by student enrollment, they cannot operate successfully unless enough parents choose to enroll their children. Increasing enrollment is the proof that charter schools are wanted and needed by Florida families.

### 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

## 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, and students. FCPCS also promotes the establishment and operation of high quality public charter schools throughout the state.



FLORIDA CONSORTIUM  
of PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

*"Florida's Charter Support Organization Since 1999"*

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