



# KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT FLORIDA'S CHARTER SCHOOLS - 2017

## CHARTER SCHOOLS BY THE NUMBERS

**654**

Schools operating

**282,924**

Students enrolled

**46**

Florida counties where charter schools operate

**1996**

The year the first Florida charter school opened in Miami.

**10%**

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 that 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

All types of students attend Florida's charter schools, reflecting the communities where charter schools operate. In 2015-16, 33% of charter school students were white, and 67% of charter school students were minority students, including 40% Hispanic, 21% African-American and 6% Other Race/Ethnicity.

### 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 is evaluated on academic progress and outcomes agreed upon in the school's binding contract. They must provide monthly and annual financial reports to their district sponsor and state. Charter schools are also evaluated and assigned a school grade using the same standards and criteria as traditional public schools.

## 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 public school operated by a Florida school district has ever been closed for poor performance.

### 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

## 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.

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 depend on per-student (FEFP) revenues to operate, they can only survive if parents choose to enroll their children in their local charter schools. Every year, more parents are choosing charter schools – proof that charter schools are wanted and needed by Florida families.

### Accreditation Linked to Charter School Success

A new report commissioned by Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools (FCPCS) found that Florida charter schools that have received accreditation through AdvancEd, the K-12 public schools accrediting agency for Florida, are far less likely to close because of operational or management problems.

The data in the report provide compelling evidence that there is a correlation between accreditation and charter school quality, which can be attributed to the continuous improvement process.

The full report is available at [www.floridacharterschools.org](http://www.floridacharterschools.org).

## 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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