

Florida's Public Charter Schools 2011 Fact Sheet



Did You Know?

- Charter schools are tuition-free public schools with certified teachers.
- Charter schools are held accountable for improved student achievement and for fiscal management of public funds
- Charter school students must take the FCAT.
- Charter schools must follow the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
- Charter schools are run by independent governing boards.
- Charter schools serve a broad diversity of students.
- Charter schools are funded by public tax dollars. However, charter schools receive only 60-80% of what school districts actually spend on each public school student.
- Only a handful of charter schools receive funds from property taxes for their facilities.
- Charter schools use student-teacher-parent partnerships to drive academic excellence
- Charter schools must comply with school-average class size mandate

What is a Public Charter School?

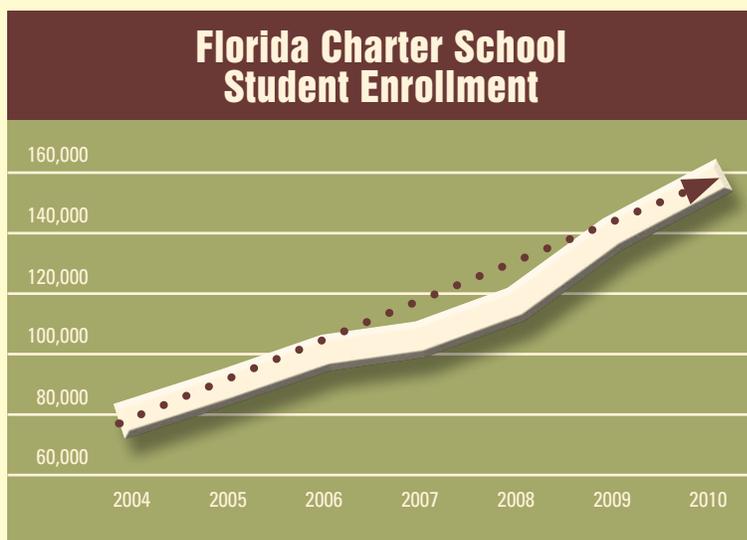
Charter schools are independent, state funded public schools. They are able to be more innovative, but are still held accountable for improved student achievement. Public charter schools have become a vital part of Florida's public education system since the first charter school opened in 1996.

Snapshot of Florida's Charter School Market

- 459 charter schools serve 154,481 students
- Charter schools are operating in 43 of Florida's 67 counties
- 72% of the 260 charter schools that received a grade in 2009-10 were graded A or B
- More new charter schools opened in Florida this year than in any other state

Parental Demand for Charter Schools Continues to Grow

Charter schools continue to grow robustly in number and enrollment, with 55 new schools opening in August 2010. Florida is second in the nation in the number of students enrolled in charter schools and third in the nation in the number of charter schools.¹



FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
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"Florida's Charter Support Organization Since 1999"

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Florida Charter Schools Stand Out in the FCAT

Charter schools have made remarkable advances in FCAT achievement with their students, particularly at-risk and minority students.

On average, charter school students performed better on the FCAT than their peers attending traditional public schools at nearly every grade level in reading, math and science.²

Four types of students have been especially well-served by charter schools: Hispanic, African-American, students on free and reduced lunch, and SWD (students with disabilities). The percentage of students in these groups that achieved proficiency in reading, math and science was dramatically higher in charter schools at many grade levels and in many subject areas.

- **A higher percentage of Hispanic charter school students** achieved proficiency and above in FCAT reading, math and science than Hispanic students attending traditional public schools³;
- **A higher percentage of African-American students** attending charter middle schools achieved Level 3 proficiency in reading than their peers in traditional public schools;
- **A higher percentage of SWD (students with disabilities)** attending charter schools reached Level 3 and above than SWD students attending traditional high schools.

These achievement results indicate that charter schools are providing high quality educational choices to Florida families.



Charter Schools Do More with Less

Charter schools operate on a fraction of the funds that traditional public schools receive⁴. Only a handful of charter schools receive Capital Millage Funding from local property tax dollars.

Charter schools in Florida are only eligible for capital funding after being in operation for three years. However, this pool of funds – divided among all eligible schools – is limited and has not increased proportionately with the growth in the number of charter schools.

The Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools is a 501(c)(3) charter school support organization that has provided a seamless system of support to charter schools since 1999. FCPCS promotes the establishment and operation of high quality public charter schools throughout the state. It also works closely with the Florida Department of Education and the State Legislature to promote quality and accountability within the public education system.

PREPARED BY



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1 National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, www.publiccharterschools.org

2 Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, November 2009

3. Achievement Levels, based on both scale scores and developmental scale scores, range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), with 3 representing proficiency at grade level.

4. Ball State University Study, May 2010 - <http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/ocsr/funding/> and Charter School Funding: Inequity Persists, 2005 - Thomas B. Fordham Institute