

FLORIDA'S PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS 2012 FACT SHEET



FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
of PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

"Florida's Charter Support Organization Since 1999"

About the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools (FCPCS)

FCPCS 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 continues to serve as the consistent voice of all Florida charter schools, while promoting high quality charter school practices.

Parents Are The Driving Force Behind Charter School Growth

Charter schools continue to grow robustly in number and enrollment, with 57 new schools opening in 2011, bringing the total number to 519. Florida is third in the nation in the number of charter schools.¹ Growth continues to be driven by parental demand for a quality public school option. 62% of all Florida charter schools are independently operated (not run by management companies).

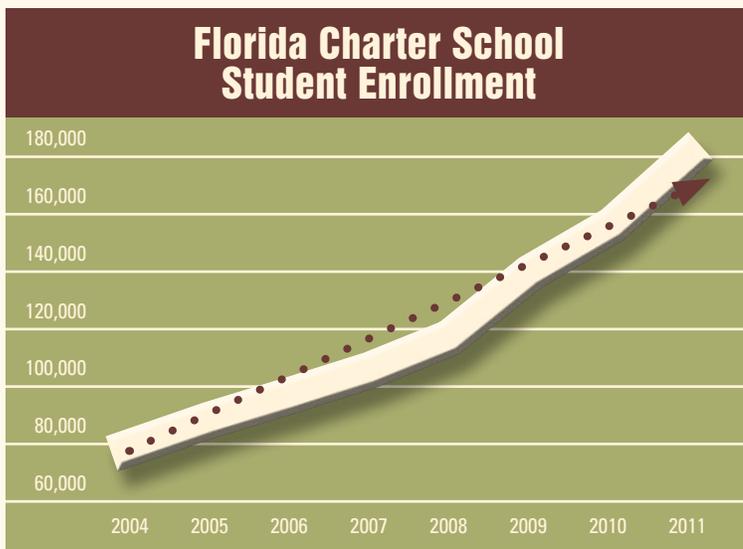


The Face of Florida's Public Charter Schools

179,931 charter school students

270,000 charter school parents

8,100 charter school teachers



Florida Charter School Law Supports Accountability

The National Alliance of Public Charter Schools ranks Florida third in the nation in state charter school law in terms of how well it supports charter school quality and growth.³

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

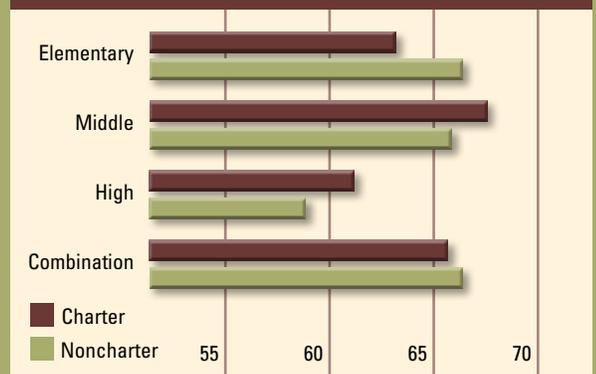
² 2010-11 School Accountability Reports, Charter and Non-Charter Grade Component Averages, Florida Department of Education.

³ Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2012.

Providing Academic Excellence

FCAT results from 2011 show that students attending Florida charter schools are performing at similar achievement rates as students attending non-charter public schools, indicating that charter schools provide a high quality educational choice for Florida families.² 74% of charter schools that were graded in 2010-11 received an "A" or "B" state grade.

Average Percent of Students Meeting High Standards in Reading, Math and Science



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Myths vs. The Facts

MYTH Charter schools take funds away from public schools.

FACT Charter schools ARE public schools and their funds are used to educate public school students. Charter schools are just one of the options available to families within Florida's K-12 public school system.

MYTH Charter schools are not held accountable for academic performance.

FACT Charter schools are graded the same as district public schools and must also follow the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Unlike district public schools, charter schools can be and will be closed if they are not performing to state standards, are financially unsound or cannot meet the conditions of their charters. 165 charter schools have been closed since 1998.

MYTH Charter school teachers are not certified.

FACT Charter school teachers must have the same state certification as district school teachers.

MYTH Charter schools are bad for the teaching profession.

FACT 8,100 teachers have chosen to work in public charter schools, many of whom come from traditional public schools. The charter school environment offers educators more flexibility with the development and implementation of curriculum, more interaction with parents, and often better opportunities for professional growth and advancement.

MYTH Charter schools have few rules to follow.

FACT While it is true that charter schools are provided certain freedom regarding instruction delivery and curriculum, **charter schools must meet academic benchmarks and financial performance as outlined in state statute, adhere to guidelines dictated by their authorizers – the school Districts – and the Department of Education.**

MYTH Charter schools do not serve students with disabilities.

FACT Similar to district public schools, a charter school must provide Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services to students. According to state statute, a sponsor / school District "shall provide certain administrative and educational services to charter schools." These services include exceptional student education administration services" (s 1002.33(20), F.S.). Under certain circumstances, a district public school or charter school may not be able to meet the needs of every student. When

this occurs, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) committee which includes representatives from the district and the charter school, along with the student's parents, meet to determine the best possible educational setting to serve the needs of that student.

According to FLDOE, in 2009, 14.3% of students attending district public schools were classified as ESE. ESE population at charter schools was 10.8%. Access to the McKay Scholarship has impacted these percentages. There are currently 22,000 students using the McKay Scholarship to meet their ESE needs. Part of Florida's school choice programs, the McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program provides students with special needs the opportunity to attend a participating private school or transfer out of their assigned public school.

Charter schools are helping students achieve academically and are doing it for a fraction of the cost than a district public school – while still employing state-certified educators and providing students with a quality education program.

Florida's charter schools have

increasingly diverse student populations and 59 percent of the students served in 2008-09 are minorities. Hispanic students comprise 31% of Florida's charter school enrollment in 2008-09 (Florida Dept. of Education)

White 41%, African American 22%, Hispanic 31%, Other 6%

The Truth about Charter School Funding

☛ Charter schools are funded by public tax dollars. Both district schools and charter schools receive per student funding from the State. However, charter schools receive only 60-80% of what school districts actually spend on each public school student. Florida law states that districts "may share" Capital Millage with charter schools they sponsor. However, only a handful of charter schools receive Capital Millage Funding from property taxes for their facilities even though both district school and charter school parents contribute.

☛ Charter schools in Florida are only eligible for capital funding (through PECO-Public Education Capital Outlay) 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.

For more information contact:



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