



## The ABC's of Public Charter Schools in Michigan

- Charter schools, referred to as “Public School Academies” in state law, were created in 1993 as part of Proposal A’s constitutional amendment that dramatically altered our funding system for K-12 education and created schools of choice.
- Charter schools, while subject to the same laws, rules and regulations affecting all public schools, have the flexibility to innovate but are held accountable for student achievement.
- While under the general supervision of the State Board of Education, each charter school has a board of directors and is authorized by a university, community college, intermediate school district or a local school district, and the authorizer is responsible for oversight.
- There are more than 110,000 students and 5,000 teachers in the state’s 247 charter schools, representing roughly 7% of the state’s K-12 student population. 45% of charter schools currently offer high school grades, and this number is growing each year.
- Charter schools provide a tuition-free education for **all** students through an open enrollment process, with random lotteries held if the number of applicants outnumbers available seats.
- Charters represent a variety of educational focuses, including college prep, culture immersion, arts & music, foreign languages, life skills, & strict discipline academies.
- Most charters provide extended school days and years, tutoring services, enhanced individual attention, character education and early foreign language instruction. Roughly 8% of charter students receive special education services.
- The high-quality teachers in charter schools are required to be certified under state law, just like teachers in traditional public schools.
- Two-thirds of all students in charter schools are minorities.
- More than 50% of the state’s charter school students qualify for free or reduced price lunch.
- According to the Michigan Dept of Education, charter school students in grades K-8 outperform students in similar traditional public school districts in 25 of 27 MEAP tests.
- Charter high school students have achieved an 86% graduation rate, 12% above similar traditional districts.
- According to the MDE, students in charter schools receive, on average, \$1,778 less per year in combined state and local financial resources than students in host districts.
- Charter public schools bring new and additional financial resources to a community through partnerships with businesses and foundations.
- Over 40 charter schools have been closed in the past 16 years, most likely for not meeting the expectations of their authorizer.

*Updated: March 2011*