

FACTS ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS

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Charter schools—which are **tuition-free public schools** created and operated by parents, organizations, or community groups to fill an educational need not otherwise offered by traditional schools—can direct their resources where their students need them most.

Charters have **more flexibility** than conventional public schools in exchange for being held to **additional standards** to make sure they are meeting their student goals. It is for those reasons that public charter schools are part of the solution to a better education system; they offer an alternative to the monopoly that is leaving so many students behind.

Studies show that **charter school students make greater academic progress** than students in traditional public schools. Sixty-four (64) percent of California's charter schools met student achievement targets on state tests in the 2008-09 school year compared to just 58% of non-charter schools.

Charter schools must admit all students who apply - if there is excess demand for the number of seats available, the school must conduct a lottery to determine who will be enrolled. As schools of choice, all startup charters must admit students regardless of the location of their residence.

Charter schools are required to hire **credentialed teachers**, just like traditional schools, for core subjects.

When lawmakers passed the Charter Schools Act of 1992, California became the second state in the country (after Minnesota) to enact charter school legislation. Since then, enrollment and performance have steadily grown, making charters in the state some of the strongest models in the nation.

In 2009, California charter schools grew by 20%, serving 56,000 new students. **Today, charters serve more than 341,000 students in California.** By 2017-18, or the 25th anniversary of the state's charter movement, we project that more than 1,000,000 students will attend California charter schools.

For more information : www.calcharters.org

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SUMMARY

- Charter Schools:
 - Are PUBLIC schools that serve ALL students
 - Are Tuition-free
 - Participate in state tests, and generally perform better than non-charters
 - Employ credentialed teachers
- There are 5,043 charter schools in the United States, serving more than 1.5 million students
- In California, there are more than 800 charter schools, serving more than 341,000 students
- California Charter Student Demographics:
 - Hispanic/Latino – 41%
 - White – 35%
 - African-American – 12%
 - Asian – 4%
 - Other (Indian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, Multi-Racial) – 8%
 - Special Education Students – 7%
 - English Language Learner Students – 18%

Choosing the Right School for Your Family

Charter schools are a good choice as you consider your child's educational options because they offer a variety of learning environments to meet your family's needs. No two charter schools are alike; some offer thematic or specialized curriculum, others focus on the basics. Some charter schools look like traditional public schools; others offer online classes and may not even have a physical campus. What charters do have in common, though, is that they are places where meaningful parental involvement is encouraged and valued.

When choosing a school for your child, consider your child's educational needs and your family's educational priorities. Identify your child's needs and learning style. Each child has their own set of needs. When choosing the right school, it is important to identify how your child learns best. Is it in small groups, or by participating in project-based learning? Does your child have an interest in the arts, or would he/she benefit from an independent study school?

Research schools by reading school information and participating in a school visit. While on campus, talk to teachers, visit their classes, and make sure you feel like the school is a good fit before making an important decision. When visiting the school be sure to visit classrooms and observe the teachers in action with students. Notice the student-to-teacher ratio, as class size may be an important factor for your child and your decision making.

The majority of charter schools ask parents to be involved in the school community. Inquire about volunteer hours and opportunities at the school.

Ask questions to understand if the school is the best fit for your child. One of the best ways to find out about a school is to ask another parent. They can give you insight about how their child feels about the school, if the teachers are effective, and if they are satisfied with their school choice.

Learn more about charters and find schools in your area at www.calcharters.org

Make your voice heard!
Get involved with Families That Can
www.familiesthatcan.org



All families have the right to high-quality public school choices.

Charters get results for students because they have:

- More flexibility on curriculum, budget and staffing
- Greater ability to make quick and effective changes to meet a student's need
- High level of accountability with review and renewal every 5 years
- Engaged teachers who are empowered to make decisions to benefit students
- Parents encouraged by the school to work as a team with teachers to advance their child's academic progress