

# A CLOSE LOOK AT FLORIDA'S PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS 2018

## Florida 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 Public 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. Every charter school is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Charter schools must hire certified teachers.

## How Are Public Charter Schools Funded?

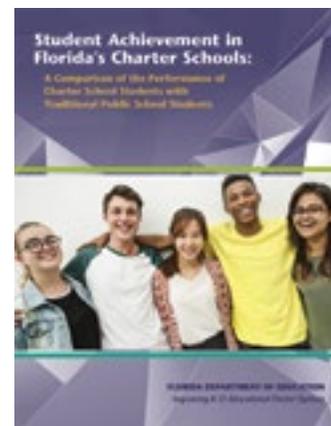
Public Charter schools receive funding from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) using the same FTE formula applied to district schools. Charter schools must also pay an administrative fee to their district sponsors of five percent of FTE for the first 250 students.

## Report Shows Florida Public Charter Schools Outperforming Public Schools

The annual report on public charter school student achievement published by the Florida Department of Education found that charter school students outperformed their peers in traditional public schools in almost all achievement areas.\*

- A higher percentage of charter school students scored a level three or above on the statewide assessment
- A higher percentage of charter school students made learning gains
- Charter schools did a better job in reducing the achievement gap between white and African-American students, and white and Hispanic students in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies among most grade levels and subgroups.

*\*Florida Department of Education, Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison of the Performance of Charter School Students with Traditional Public School Students, March 2017.*



# MYTHS ABOUT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS VS THE TRUTH

**MYTH:**  
Charter schools are private schools.

**TRUTH: Charter schools are NOT private schools.**

They are tuition-free public schools that are part of the state's public education system. They operate with contracts (charters) issued by the local public school districts. They receive the same per pupil funding as district public schools, minus up to five percent administrative fee for the first 250 students paid to the districts.

**MYTH:**  
Charter schools are for-profit entities run by big corporations.

**TRUTH: By law, all Florida charter schools must be organized as nonprofit organizations or be operated by nonprofit organizations managed by volunteer community-based boards of directors.**

About 20 percent of the charter schools in Florida contract with charter management companies for services, but many of these are also nonprofit organizations.

**MYTH:**  
Charter schools have little or no oversight in Florida.

**TRUTH: Public charter schools are closely monitored.**

Charter schools are closely monitored by their district sponsors and the state. They are required to file several reports a year to their district sponsors and state detailing their financial and operational status. Charter school students take the same state assessments as other traditional public school students. Charter schools are evaluated and assigned a school grade using the same standards and criteria as traditional public schools.

If a charter school receives two consecutive grades of "F," the district sponsor may close the school. No public school operated by a Florida school district has ever been closed for poor performance, while 316 charter schools have been closed since 1997.

**MYTH:**  
Charter schools siphon money from School Districts.

**TRUTH: Public charter schools serve the same public school students who would have otherwise been enrolled in traditional public schools.**

We believe that educational funding should be used for the benefit of students, whether they attend district or charter schools. Charter schools actually serve public school students at a lower per student cost than the local school systems.

**MYTH:**  
Charter schools cherry pick only the best students.

**TRUTH: Parents are the ones who choose public charter schools for their children, not the other way around.**

The doors of charter schools are open to everyone, pending space limitations. To help avoid over-enrollment, charter schools utilize a lottery system for the most fair selection process.

## 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

## 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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