

WHAT ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS?

Charter schools are unique public schools that are free and open to all students who wish to attend. They cannot have any entrance requirements and cannot charge tuition. Public charter schools are not religious and cannot discriminate against students on any basis. Like other public schools, public charter schools are funded by local, state and federal tax dollars based on student enrollment.

Public charter schools have more flexibility and autonomy to serve individual student needs in return for a commitment to meet higher standards of accountability.

HISTORY

Twenty-five years ago, Minnesota passed the first public charter school law in the nation. Today, 43 states and the District of Columbia have public charter school legislation on the books. Public charter schools serve nearly 3 million public school students in more than 6,700 schools.

Virginia has only nine public charter schools and its charter school law is ranked 39th out of 43 in the nation.



RESULTS DRIVEN

- More than a quarter of the Best High Schools in America are public charter schools, according to 2016 reports by Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report.
- A 2013 Mathematica Research Institute Study found that public charter school students earn approximately 12% more after high school graduation than graduates from other public schools.
- The National Charter School Study 2013, conducted by the Center for Education Research Options (CREDO) at Stanford University, finds that in the aggregate, charter school students in the 26 states gained an additional 8 days of learning each year in reading beyond their local peers in traditional public schools.
- Low-income students, black students, and English Language Learners gain significantly more days of learning each year in both reading and math compared to their traditional public school peers.



RESPONSIVE

Public charter school educators, school leaders, and staff have more freedom to innovate and try new ways to improve student achievement. Public charter schools can be more responsive and create an environment tailored to the needs of individual students while still being held accountable for student learning. Educators can adjust the curriculum, change the school calendar or schedule, and adopt new methodologies to make sure all students are learning.



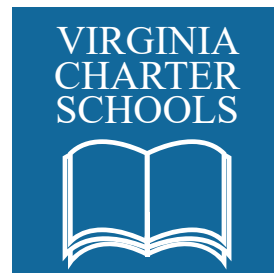
ACCOUNTABLE

Public charter schools must meet the same accountability standards and take the same tests as all public schools. They must serve all students, including students with special needs, bilingual students, and English Language Learners.



EMPOWERING

Public charter schools foster a partnership between parents, teachers, and students to create an environment where parents can be more involved, teachers are given the freedom to be innovative in their classrooms, and students are provided the structure they need to learn. This holds all groups accountable for the most important goal: improving student achievement.



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