



*Have you ever wished
you had a school that
was attuned to the
strengths and unique
talents of your child?*

In most states, children are assigned to schools based on geography, and local schools may not offer the programs or atmosphere that your child requires to flourish academically and, perhaps, socially.

Many families are frustrated with the one-size-fits-all approach of most conventional public schools but have no alternatives. What they seek is the right to choose the best school for their children.

If someone told you that you could send your child to a school that broke the cookie cutter mold of the conventional public school, that was filled with teachers that chose to be there, students that weren't just assigned to be there by zip code, and supportive parents that chose to send their children there, would you do it? Thousands of families today are doing just that, by sending their children to one of the nation's many charter public schools.


Center for Education Reform

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**GREAT
SCHOOLS...**



**ARE MADE,
NOT BORN.**

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools are innovative public schools, designed by educators, parents or civic leaders, open and attended by choice, free from most rules and regulations governing conventional public schools and accountable for results. They are designed to deliver programs tailored to educational excellence and the needs of the communities they serve.

Charter schools operate outside the educational bureaucracy that too often stifles innovation in traditional public schools. They are not private schools and as public schools they do not charge tuition and they may not "pick and choose" their students. A school will often serve children whose needs are not being met by a conventional public school.

CHARTER SCHOOLS OPERATE FROM THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES:

1 **Accountable for Results**

Charter schools are held accountable for how well they educate children in a safe and responsible environment, not for their compliance with district and state regulations. In exchange for freedom from these regulations, charter operators promise to fulfill a set of academic and operational goals. Charter schools are judged on how well they meet the goals established in their charter and how well they manage the financial and operational responsibilities entrusted to them. Charters must also attract enough students and ensure parental satisfaction in order to stay open. Unlike conventional public schools that remain open year after year regardless of financial or academic health, if charters fail to deliver, they are closed.

2 **Innovative by Choice**

Almost anyone interested in creating a better educational opportunity for children can start a charter school. Parents, teachers, community groups, and organizations have already started charter schools in many communities across the U.S. and these schools are as diverse as the communities they serve. Charters can be focused on a specialized curriculum, like the arts, or they may serve special student populations, such as at-risk students. Some schools use progressive educational approaches and others use more back-to-basics approaches. Charter schools are sponsored by entities that want to foster innovation and excellence in schools: state and local school boards, colleges and universities, and other community agencies. Students choose to attend, and teachers choose to teach at charter schools.

3 **Standards-driven**

Charter schools are freed from the bureaucracy and regulations that divert the energies of most conventional public schools. However, charters must practice open admissions policies, meet all the same state and federal health and safety standards and comply with all civil rights laws. Charters must show progress towards achieving at or above the state average. So instead of jumping through procedural hoops and over paperwork hurdles, educators focus on setting and reaching high academic standards for their students.

Charter schools offer communities the chance to create the greatest range of educational choices for their children. Charter operators have the incentive to create schools that provide new and better services to students, and charter schools inspire the rest of the system to work harder and be more responsive to the needs of the children.

DO CHARTER SCHOOLS WORK?

Yes! Charter schools continue to develop, thrive and, most importantly, serve the children they educate by providing a more individualized instruction that better meets each child's needs. Their success is evident in student achievement-including students who were not previously successful in traditional public schools-and in community demand; most charter schools have waiting lists.

State testing data indicates that charter schools serve a diverse student population but outpace their conventional public school peers in urban, rural and suburban America. Charter schools typically receive fewer dollars than traditional schools, yet they provide more services and demonstrate achievement at faster rates than non-charter schools. Charter schools are accountable, successful and provide innovative opportunities for children and parents across the country.

Go to www.yourcharterschool.com to find out if there is a charter school in your community or if you are interested in starting a charter school of your own, call the Center for Education Reform at:

1-800-521-2118.