

More Choice, More Opportunity: Lift the Cap on Charter Public Schools



Charter public schools provide educational choice for parents and expand educational opportunity for their children.

Choice is a powerful weapon for parents seeking educational equity and equal access to quality educational opportunities for their children. Parents who seek alternatives for their children, but cannot afford private school, have found an answer in charter public schools. Nearly 25,000 children are enrolled; 19,000 sit on wait lists.

Charter public schools are succeeding academically

In 2007, a higher percentage of students in charter public schools scored proficient or advanced on every MCAS test. Several urban charters with high percentage of minority and poor students scored among the best in the state – higher than the state’s best suburban schools.

Charter public schools are closing the achievement gap

Charter public schools are open to all – including special education and Limited English Proficient students. Enrollment is determined by lottery. Statewide, charters serve twice as many poor and minority students as districts. More important, though, they are closing the achievement gap. A far higher percentage of African American, Hispanic, special needs and low-income students are scoring proficient or advanced on MCAS compared with the same demographic groups in district schools.

Charter public schools are sharing best practices

Charters are a major reason for the progress our public schools have made over the past ten years. They are promoting real change in traditional school systems and collaborating with districts to share best practices, providing benefits not only for students who attend them, but for all public school students.

Charter public schools are held to extremely high standards

Charter public schools first go through a rigorous application process, and are evaluated every year by the state Department of Education. Their charters are up for renewal every five years. If schools do not perform up to standards, they can be shut down. Massachusetts’ application process and oversight practices have been rated the toughest in the nation.

There is no loss of public school funding because charter schools are public schools.

Charters are funded by taking a slice of education spending and reallocating it from district to charter. The formula ensures that the amount of money that charters receive reflects the amount of money the district spends on those students. The state reimburses districts for the money that is transferred to charters: 100 percent the first year, 60 percent the second, and 40 percent the third.

Lift the cap on charter public schools

In high need communities throughout the state, parents are seeking choices for their children. But, options are limited by state laws that cap charter enrollment in individual communities. Raising that cap would allow more charters to be created in communities that need them most.

