

There are  
over 4,900  
charter  
schools  
across the  
country,  
educating  
over 1.5  
million  
children.

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. June 2009.  
<http://www.publiccharters.org/dashboard/>

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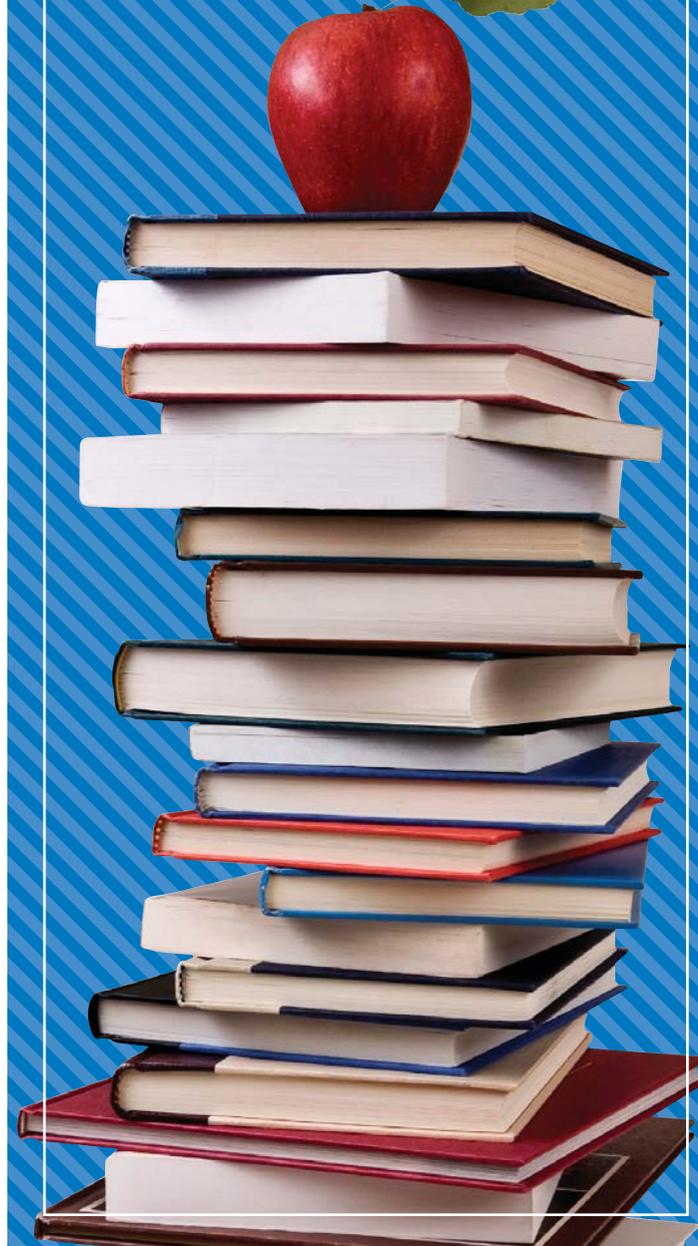
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# What is a Charter School?



# What exactly is a charter school?

**Charter schools are public schools that have the flexibility to adapt to the educational needs of individual students.** Charter schools vary in mission and model, serving a wide range of students, many with needs beyond the one-size-fits-all traditional public school. Often, charter schools provide a personalized learning environment that promotes greater student achievement. In exchange for some autonomy, charter schools have increased accountability, and must meet the testing standards dictated by the state.

On charter campuses, school leaders are permitted more freedom in managing their school, allowing them to respond in the best interest of both parents and students. Teachers at charter schools are encouraged to structure lessons to the specific needs of their students. Some charter schools even provide curriculum that specializes in a certain field such as the arts, mathematics or science. Others provide a more efficient, general education based on the educational model set forth in the charter.

**Charter schools offer quality, non-traditional public education options.**

## How are charter schools funded?

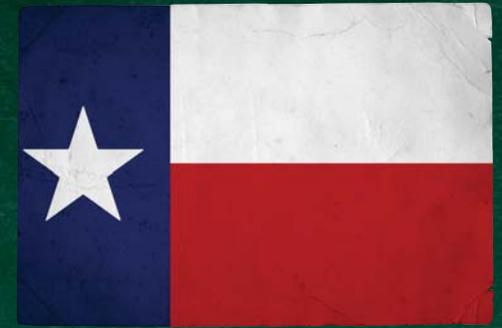
Charter schools receive state funds based on the average daily attendance of students (same as traditional public schools); however, they do not receive funds from local tax revenue and the majority, including Texas charters, do not receive state facilities funding. Texas Education Agency (TEA) data indicates that charter schools receive approximately \$1200 less in total revenue per pupil than traditional public schools.\*

## What is the purpose\*\* of charter schools?

- 1 Improve student learning
- 2 Increase the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system
- 3 Create professional opportunities that will attract new teachers to the public school system
- 4 Establish a new form of accountability for public schools
- 5 Encourage different and innovative learning methods

\*TEA Snapshot – 2005 through 2007.

\*\*Texas Education Code § 12.001



## Charter Schools in Texas

Charter schools were authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1995 to provide an alternative to traditional public schools. Texas has a 215 state cap on charters. To date, open enrollment charters serve approximately 102,000 students on over 437 campuses across the state.\*

In the state of Texas, charter schools operate under and receive academic accountability ratings from the Texas Education Agency. All charter students in Texas take the same Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test as traditional public school students.

Enrollment in Texas charter schools has increased. Last year, there were over 40,000 students on waiting lists for charter schools.\*\* Where space at a charter school is limited, admission is frequently allocated by lottery-based admissions.

\*Based on TEA Snapshot – 2009.

\*\*Texas Public Policy Foundation. "Charter Schools in Texas: The Waiting Lists Grow Longer." December, 2009.