



## 8 Facts You Never Knew About New Jersey Charter Schools

**1. Fact: Charter schools are tuition-free, public schools.**

- Charter schools are funded with public dollars and therefore must operate in accordance with all public school laws including statutes related to assessment, testing, civil rights and student health and safety. (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-8; 18A:36A-11).
- Charter schools have the freedom to innovate in their curriculum, while providing a structured and disciplined learning environment. Students, teachers and parents are more accountable for student achievement (N.J.A.C. 6A:11).

**2. Fact: Charter schools are part of the local public education system and receive public funding.**

- Charter schools are supposed to receive 90% of per pupil funding, however most charter school students, on average, receive about \$6,000 less or 69% of the per-pupil funding than their comparative public school districts due to a flaw in the funding formula.
- Charter schools do not receive funding for facilities. On average charter schools spend \$1,418 per student for the buildings, upgrades and maintenance from their per-pupil budgets, funding that could otherwise be spent in the classroom. (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-12)

**3. Fact: Charter schools serve every student who enrolls from the district or region of residence.**

- Charter schools are required to accept all students that apply from within the district and cannot implement selective enrollment policies. If more students apply than there are spaces available, charter schools must select students using an open enrollment, blind lottery process (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-8).

**4. Fact: Charter schools serve special education students and are required to comply with applicable State and federal anti-discrimination statutes.**

- According to state law, charter schools are open to all students and cannot discriminate based on intellectual abilities or status as a handicapped person (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-7).

**5. Fact: Charter school students cannot be expelled capriciously and have the same rights to due process as traditional public school students.**

- Due process rights are granted to all public school students, therefore a student cannot be expelled without adhering to the process set in law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2).

**6. Fact: Charter schools undergo greater oversight than traditional public schools.**

- Each charter is reviewed every five years (after the initial four-year term) and must provide the State Department of Education with annual reports demonstrating success.
- Charter schools are accountable for outcomes and they must demonstrate that they maintain strong board governance, provide students with a high-quality education and spend public dollars wisely.
- Charter schools must demonstrate how their students fare on state tests throughout.
- If a charter fails to uphold any of these state standards they may have their charter renewal denied or the charter may be revoked (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-16; 18A:36A-17).

***NO other type of public school has such a high-stakes accountability review.***

**7. Fact: Charter schools can only enter communities if the people in the community agree they want a charter school.**

- If the local will exists, the law then creates an opportunity to start a public charter school. A charter school can only open and stay open if enough local parents send their children to the school (N.J.A.C. 6A:11-2.1).

**8. Fact: Charter schools are breaking through long-standing barriers that have prevented students from underserved communities from attaining a high-quality education.**

- According to the NJ Department of Education, in 2013, 91 percent of all charter high school seniors graduated while the state average is 88 percent and charter host districts have a 74 percent graduation rate.
- A 2012 report conducted by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes found that students in charter schools on average make larger learning gains compared to their district school counterparts.
- NJ public charter high schools are increasing performance in low performing districts by producing higher graduation rates, performing well on the HSPA test and closing the achievement gap.