CONNECTICUT’S PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are public, tuition-free schools that are open to all students. Public charter schools provide a high-quality school option to the students and families in the communities which need it most, and where quality school options are very limited.

Public charter schools are held to some of the highest accountability standards for public schools in the state and are subject to a variety of sanctions, including school closure.

Connecticut’s 21 public charter schools represent over half of Connecticut’s districts, serving nearly 11,000 mostly low-income and minority students in 10 host districts - many of which are among the state’s largest cities. Education is arguably the single most important investment that Connecticut can make in the growth and future sustainability of its economy. Public charter schools provide excellent educational options to the state’s underserved students that will impact the state’s future sustainability, economy and workforce.

| Number of Charter Schools: 21 | Total Number of Charter School Students (2020-21): ~11,000 | Number of Students Waitlisted (2021-22): 5,289+ |

All Public School Students Should be Treated Fairly

Public charter schools face unfair and inequitable funding that creates challenges to sustaining the success of these schools.

In Connecticut, one of the wealthiest states in the country, there is a $713 million funding gap between districts primarily serving white students and those serving students of color.

Even given recent funding gains in the state’s FY22-23 budget, charter schools remain the most underfunded public schools in the state, despite the fact that they serve some of our state’s most disadvantaged students, 65% of which are low-income and 93% of whom identify as students of color.

Charter students are public school students too, and deserve to be funded according to learning needs just like all other public school students.
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Parents and families continue to demand high-quality options. Per the most statewide waitlist numbers for public charter schools, there are more than 5,289 names representing the families demanding these quality options.

PERFORMANCE

- On the 2020 Smarter Balanced assessment (SBAC), 100% of in-person public charter schools outperformed the state and district average, and some are among the schools with the highest academic growth in the state.
- On average, in 2019, public charter schools students met or exceeded grade level expectations compared to students in districts with similar populations by nearly 15 percentage points in English Language Arts (ELA) and by almost 13 percentage points in Math.
- In recent years, many public charter schools have received accolades for their successes, including several schools being named Schools of Distinction by the State Department of Education, and others being identified as "among the state's best high schools" according to U.S. News and World Report.
  - Common Ground was the state's first U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School
  - On average, the public charter school growth rate in each subject was 5 or more percentage points higher than districts with similar populations.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Public charter schools are granted a charter by the state and are allowed to operate for up to five years. These schools are subject to regular review and renewal processes, and are held accountable for results in many ways.
- These schools are subject to a variety of sanctions, including probation, corrective action plans and even school closure.
- Connecticut has recently passed laws to hold charter schools more accountable, including additional transparency provisions, conflict of interest requirements, anti-nepotism requirements, and additional disclosures.

LOCAL SCHOOLS

- Connecticut public charter schools educate mostly low-income and Black and Latino populations throughout the state. While many of the state's public charter schools are located in Bridgeport, New Haven, Stamford and Hartford, there are public charter schools spread across the state in a range of different areas. Each school offers their own unique models of schooling.

About the CT Charter Schools Association

The Connecticut Charter Schools Association is a nonprofit membership organization that serves as a unified voice for the 21 public charter schools, representing their interests at the state and local levels.