

- Test its students using the same state testing as the traditional schools.
- Provide services for special needs children in compliance with federal and state law.
- Submit a yearly audit performed by a state approved auditor to the State Board of Education.
- Admit any child who applies to be enrolled in a charter school, space permitting.
- Comply with the State Open Meetings law.
- Comply with the State Public Records law.
- Ensure that transportation is not a barrier to a child attending a school.
- Comply with all federal and state discrimination laws.
- Conduct criminal background checks for all members of the school's Board of Directors, school employees and independent contractors and their employees where they have significant access to the children or responsibility for handling money and terminate any employee with a criminal record.
- Elementary Public Charter Schools must assure that, at least, 75% of its teachers and middle and high Public Charter Schools must assure that, at least, 50% of their teachers are licensed by the NC Department of Instruction.
- Meet the requirements of the "No Child Left Behind" federal law and regulations.
- Assure each of its teachers are "highly qualified" in the subject matter they teach, as required by the "No Child Left Behind" legislation, even if they are not a licensed teacher.

The State Board of Education can terminate or not renew a school's charter if the school:

- Fails to meet the State requirements for student performance.
- Fails to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or fails to submit a yearly audit.
- Violates any condition, standard or procedure set forth in its charter.
- 2/3 of the faculty requests the charter be terminated or not renewed.
- For other good cause.

MYTH NO. 5: Public Charter Schools are causing white flight from the traditional public school systems.

FACTS: The population of Public Charter Schools in North Carolina mirror the demographics of the traditional schools.

Public Charter Schools cannot discriminate on the basis of race and ethnicity, are tuition free and must accept any student who applies, space permitting. In the event a charter school receives more student applications than it has space available in a class, grade or building, it must hold a lottery.

There is simply no way for a charter school to select students based on race.

Of the total population of students enrolled in North Carolina Public Charter Schools in the school year 2005-2006 59.0% were white, 34.6% were black, 3.4% were Hispanic and 2.8% were other minorities. Of the traditional school's population, 56.6% were white, 31.4% were black, 8.4% were Hispanic and 3.5% were other minorities.

The Charter School Act requires that, after its first year of operation, each Public Charter School must have a school population that reasonably reflects the racial and ethnic composition that mirrors the general population of the county in which the charter school operates.

LEAGUE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Philip S. Adkins, Chairman

Serving North Carolina
Charter Schools

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL MYTH-BUSTER FACTS

www.charterleague.org

MYTH NO. 1: Public Charter Schools are less accountable than traditional public schools.

FACTS: Public Charter Schools are more accountable to the state and to the parents of students enrolled at the Public Charter Schools.

- Public Charter School students take the same State ABC tests and must meet the same standards as the traditional public schools.
- Public Charter School teachers, even if not licensed, must be highly qualified in their subject area as required by the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Public Charter Schools must maintain good governance, perform well academically, have a balanced budget and submit to a standard government financial audit each year.
- If a Public Charter School fails to be well governed, perform academically or be fiscally sound, the SBE will revoke the school's charter.
- Public Charter Schools must provide educational services that satisfy the parents of the children attending the school or the parents will not enroll their children and the school will lose the funding for those children. The parents will "vote with their feet" and the Public Charter School will die.
- In the entire history of North Carolina, no poorly performing traditional public school has ever been closed; in fact, a poorly performing traditional school receives additional state funding. A Public Charter School that performs poorly will be closed. Since the first Charter Schools opened their doors in 1997, the State Board of Education has closed 11 Charter Schools and 28 Charter Schools have surrendered their charters and ceased operations.

MYTH NO.2: Public Charter Schools are "cherry picking" the best students from the local traditional schools.

FACTS: Public Charter Schools are not able to control which students are admitted to the school and have to reflect the racial demographics of the local area.

- The North Carolina Charter School Act allows a Public Charter School to give enrollment priority to the children of the initial Board of Directors only in its first year of operation. Even then, the Charter School can only give priority to 20 students or 10% of the first year enrollment, whichever is lesser. Thereafter, the children of new directors get no priority.
- The Public Charter Schools may also give enrollment priority to siblings of previously enrolled students and to the children of its principal, teachers and teacher's assistants as is the case in traditional public schools.
- Each Public Charter School must have a period of open enrollment and admit any student who applies, unless the number of students applying exceeds the capacity of a class, grade level or building. In that event, the Public Charter School must hold a lottery to determine which students will be accepted.
- By law, after the Charter School's first year of operation, the population of the school must reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the general population in the county in which the charter school is located.

MYTH NO. 3: Public Charter Schools take money for the local traditional public schools.

FACTS: Public Charter Schools are not taking any money from the traditional public schools, but rather are relieving the traditional schools of the burden and expense of providing a building, teachers, textbooks, etc. when students enroll in a Public Charter School. The Charter Schools do not "take" any of the traditional school's money for

school construction or maintenance.

- Each school system receives a designated amount of "operating" money from the state and the county for each child living in the county who attends a school in that system. Each school reports its actual enrollment during the first 20 school days each year. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction determines the total number students in each school system and provides a set amount of funding for each student in the system for operating each school.
- The county likewise determines the number of students attending each school and provides per capita funding for school operations for each student in the system.
- The county also provides "capital" funds for school construction for the local school system. The state may also provide some capital funding for school construction, but the primary source of capital funding is the local government.
- The "operating" money the state and local government allocate for each child follows the child to the charter school, but the charter school, not the traditional school, then has the responsibility to provide an education for that child, including providing school buildings.
- Public Charter Schools also receive the same state and local "operating" money for each student attending its school along with the responsibility to provide an education for that child. However, unlike traditional schools, Public Charter Schools receive no "capital" funding for school construction or maintenance from the State or Local County. When a student attends a Public Charter School instead of a traditional public school, the Charter School receives the state and local "operating" money that would have gone to the traditional public school had the child attended that school. The Public Charter School has to provide a building, teachers, textbooks and administrative support, in short everything the traditional school provides except that unlike a traditional school, the Charter School must build or rent its facilities without any "capital" funding from the state or county.
- Most Public Charter Schools spend around 20% of the money they and the traditional schools receive for operating each school in order to fund their facilities because they receive no capital funding for buildings.

Public Charter Schools use private capital funding to construct buildings and facilities so that each charter school building costs the taxpayers nothing.

MYTH NO. 4: Public Charter Schools are not subject to any rules.

FACTS: Public Charter Schools must be organized as a not-for-profit North Carolina corporation and must obtain federal tax-exempt status within 24 months of the beginning of operations. In addition, each Public Charter School must: Comply with the requirements of the N. C. Charter School Act NCGS §115C-238.29 et. seq.

- Each Public Charter School must comply with the Non Profit Corporations Act which governs the operation of non-profit corporations including conflicts of interest, financial non-management and record keeping.
- Comply with all state and local health and safety required of a local school system.
- Be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions, policies employment practices and operations.
- Not charge tuition or fees
- Carry liability insurance of at least two \$Two Million (2) Dollars.
- Provide instruction for 180 days.