



MISSION: The Maine Charter School Commission will provide thoughtful stewardship in authorizing and monitoring public charter schools consistent with State statutes to create unique, high-quality learning options for Maine students.

**2,400+ Students
Enrolled**



**Students Enrolled
from 289 Cities &
Towns Across
Maine**



9 Schools

PURPOSE: To allow charter schools to be established as public schools that:

- Improve pupil learning by creating more high quality schools with high standards for pupil performance;
- Close achievement gaps between high-performing and low-performing groups of public school students;
- Increase high-quality educational opportunities within the public education system;
- Provide alternative learning environments for students who are not thriving in traditional school settings;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different, high-quality models of teaching and other aspects of schooling; and
- Provide students, parents, community members and local entities with expanded opportunities for involvement in the public education system.



Common Myths about Public Charter Schools

MYTH: Charter school teachers do not need to be licensed.

FACT: A public charter school must comply with applicable federal laws and regulations regarding the qualification of teachers and other instructional staff. All full-time teachers in a Maine public charter school must hold an appropriate teaching certificate or become certified within 3 years of the date they are hired, except those with an advanced degree, with professional certification, or with unique expertise in the curricular area in which they teach.

MYTH: Charter schools are “stealing money” from the public school system.

FACT: Since charter schools are public schools, the money that follows students who choose to attend charter schools remains in the public education system.

MYTH: Charter schools are for “troubled” students.

FACT: Public charter schools are for all students. Charter schools are diverse in their missions, their programs, and in the populations they serve.

MYTH: Charter schools do not have to meet the same educational standards as district schools.

FACT: Public charter schools are required to meet the same educational standards and Maine Learning Results as traditional public district schools. In addition, they must meet accountability measures in their contract with their authorizer.



MYTH: Charter schools receive more state money than traditional district schools.

FACT: State per-pupil education funds follow each student to a district or charter school according to the same “Essential Program Allocation” (EPA) formulas. District schools receive more state funding for teacher pensions, for facility construction and renovation, and for other capital expenses such as school buses. Most district schools also receive local funds through “supplemental allocations”. Charters may not levy property taxes, which are additional sources of revenue to district schools.

MYTH: Charter schools are private schools.

FACT: Charter schools are public schools, part of Maine’s system of public education.

Maine public charter schools:

- Must be nonreligious;
- Must be tuition-free;
- May not require entrance exams;
- Must accept all students equally;
- Must, to ensure equal access, hold a lottery if more students apply than there is room.

MYTH: Charter schools do not provide special education services.

FACT: Charter schools must provide special education services according to the same federal and state requirements that apply to district schools.

MYTH: Charter schools only serve gifted students.

FACT: Charter schools are open to all and may not have entrance requirements. Public charter schools may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability.