

Excerpted from "NH Charter School funding: Myths, facts and HB 563,"
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Myth: Charter schools are private schools.

Charter schools are public schools. They cannot charge tuition or select students. They are held accountable educationally and fiscally by the state. They do not have special entrance requirements are not religious and cannot discriminate against students on any basis.

Myth: Public charter schools take money from local district public schools.

Charter schools receive all of their funding directly from the state. This has very little impact on local school districts since the local tax dollars do not follow the child to the public charter school but remain with the public district school.

Myth: Public charter schools are in competition with local district schools.

Public charter schools are a symbiotic complement to district public schools. District schools do the incredibly difficult work of addressing the needs of the vast majority of students and often very well. But research clearly shows that not all students learn in the same way or thrive with one singular approach. This is where charter schools fit in. Charters provide a free and open public option for students offering unique learning environments and/or instructional methods.

Myth: Public charter schools are not held financially accountable.

Since public charter schools are funded with public dollars, they are required by law to be held accountable for how taxpayer dollars are spent with regular audits and ongoing reviews from their authorizing entities. NH public charter schools are required to submit quarterly and annual financial reports to the NH DOE and have a fiduciary responsibility to the state of NH.

Myth: Public charter schools are not accountable to state educational standards.

Public charter schools are required to meet all state and federal education standards, just like traditional public schools. In addition, they are judged on how well they meet student achievement goals established by their charter contracts and programmatic evaluations by their authorizers. All public charter schools must meet rigorous academic, financial and managerial standards in order to be reauthorized every five years.

Myth: Public charter school teachers are unqualified.

NH Charter law requires that at least 1/2 of all lead teachers be NH certified. Public charter schools seek teachers whose interests match the needs of their mission. Many of these are certified in traditional teaching methods, some in non-traditional approaches. In fact, charter

schools often attract a greater variety of teachers than may typically teach in traditional/neighborhood public schools.

Myth: Public charter schools cherry pick the best students and parents away from district schools.

Federal and state laws require public charter schools enroll to students by lottery. Any student can apply from anywhere in NH to NH state-issued charter schools.

Myth: Public charter schools can teach whatever they want.

Public charter schools have some flexibility in curriculum and instruction, but have been expected to use the NH Curriculum Frameworks as a guide currently and move now the Common Core. Public charter school students take the same standardized state tests as other public school students. The NH DOE judges successful academic outcomes of charter schools in large part on those test results.

Myth: NH Charter School Board Trustees are self-appointed.

NH public charter school Board face the same challenges to populate their volunteer boards as public district schools. While not publically elected, these members are selected by current Board Trustees based on the skills they need to round out the school's needs, so that the Boards can best oversee the financial and functional health of the school and its programming.

Myth: If public charter schools receive sustainable funding then every district school will want to become a charter school.

Why would a public district school reduce its funding to 50 percent by eliminating local tax dollars?

Additional background: The state average education funding is approximately \$14,000 per child per year. In contrast, NH public charter schools receive \$5,498 per child, per year for elementary students, and \$3,725 for kindergarten students (the state only pays for a 1/2 day program for charter kindergarten students). Charter schools are responsible to fill the funding gap between the actual cost of the per-pupil education and the funding received from the State.