



Leadership for  
Public Charter Schools

OHIO COALITION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION



# TRUTH ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are 'schools of choice' and families have never been more supportive of Ohio's public charter schools - based on student enrollment and wait lists. Yet, while charter schools enjoy strong support, there are still vocal critics who perpetuate a number of myths. Through our series, **Truth About Charter Schools**, we will present the facts.

## 1 Are charters considered public schools?

**YES**, charter schools are public, tuition-free, non-profit, non-sectarian schools and are independent of local school districts.

Charter schools are parent friendly, with small class sizes and they provide individual attention to their students. Children are never assigned to charters - 'because they are schools of choice.'

That growth represents thousands of parents exercising their - right to school choice!

## 2 Can charter schools be located anywhere in Ohio?

**NO**, state law requires that charter schools can only be located in Ohio's Eight Urban Districts (Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown), plus a few other perennially low performing school districts.

## 3 Are charter school teachers licensed?

**YES**, charter school teachers must be licensed, certified, and "highly qualified", as defined under federal law. They meet the same standards and educational credentials as traditional public school teachers.

## 4 Do charter schools excel academically?

**YES**, when compared with neighboring district schools, and when student demographics are taken into consideration, (Poverty, mobility, disabilities and English language learners) the majority of charter schools outperform traditional district urban schools.

## 5 Are charter schools and district schools funded equally?

**IT'S NOT EVEN CLOSE.** While charter schools do receive state funding, unlike district schools, charters do not have access to local property tax funds. Even when a parent transfers their child to a charter school, the local property tax dollars stay with the district school.

Currently, charter schools receive about \$7,500 per student. However, because district schools receive both state funds AND local property taxes they benefit with significantly more funding per student.

### FY 2016 District School Funding

• Dayton	\$19,783
• Columbus	\$17,915
• Toledo	\$18,758
• Cleveland	\$21,215
• Youngstown	\$26,412

(ODE, 2016 District Profile Report)

Not only are charter schools woefully underfunded but, unlike district schools, charters must direct a portion of their limited funding to pay for their school building.

## 6 Are charter schools accountable to Ohio taxpayers?

**YES!** Charter schools are highly regulated by Ohio and accountable to the state and taxpayers.

- Fiscal Accountability – All schools are subject to audits by their sponsors, the Department of Education and State Auditor to assure transparency and fiscal accountability.
- Academic Accountability – Charter schools must meet predetermined academic benchmarks.

Charter schools that fail to meet those performance levels may be considered for closure.

**NOTE:** Failing traditional district schools are never subject to closure.

## 7 The good news - Thousands of parents are waiting for more charter schools

More and more families are choosing public charter schools for their children's education.