

Public, independent, and charter schools: what are the differences?

We believe that Gordon is a truly special place and deeply appreciate your considering us as the school for your child. However, we understand that when researching schools, you have a number of options, including public, charter, and independent (sometimes referred to as private) schools. Each type of school has its own characteristics and benefits and you may find that there are even multiple options for each in your community. Below is a brief comparison of each type of school excerpted from a resource at Understood.org.

We encourage you to examine all the options to help you determine the right fit for your child and family. If you have any questions about the admissions process at Gordon, please email us at admissions@gordonschool.org.

	Public schools	Charter schools	Independent schools
Free to attend	YES	YES	NO
Must apply to attend	NO (Some public magnet schools may require applications.)	YES	YES
Funded by the public	YES	MAYBE (In addition to public funding, some charter schools are funded in part by private donors.)	NO
Independent governance	NO (Run by the local public school district.)	MAYBE (Run by an independent board of directors beholden to a charter-granting organization.)	YES (Run by an independent board of trustees.)
Required to follow state and federal education laws	YES	MAYBE (Must follow education laws, but in some states charter schools may have freedom from certain rules.)	NO
Required by law to evaluate students for special education	YES	YES	NO (By law, local public school districts must find and evaluate children in independent school that they believe may have disabilities.)
May choose not to accept applicants because they have learning differences	NO	NO	NO (However, independent schools can choose not to accept applicants for a variety of reasons.)