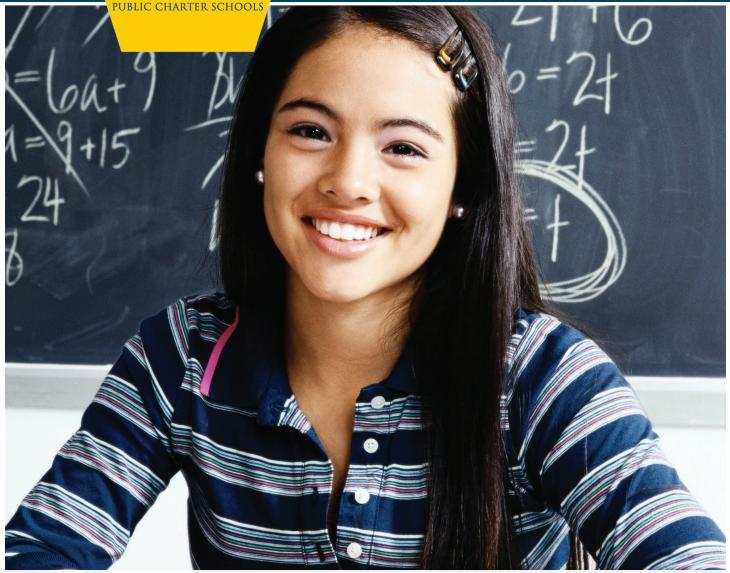


# PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS FACT VS. FICTION



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## **PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS: FACT VS. FICTION**

As of the 2015 -16 school year, nearly 100,000 students were enrolled in Pennsylvania's 162 public brick-and-mortar charter schools.

Since their inception in 1997, public brick-and-mortar charter schools have been mischaracterized and painted with a broad brush of underperformance and financial mismanagement.

The following information is to correct the record and separate fact from fiction about Pennsylvania's public brick-and-mortar charter schools.

#### **FICTION**

- Charter schools are private, for-profit schools that are operated by private entities.
- Charter schools do not offer special education services.
- Charter schools are selective in which students are enrolled.
- Charter schools are not required to have certified teachers.
- Charter schools do not provide 180 days of instruction.

- Charter schools are financially hurting school districts.
- Charter schools are not required to administer the state's standardized tests.
- Charter schools are not required to follow the Right to Know Law.
- Charter schools receive more funding than they need.
- Charter schools are harming the public education system.

#### **FACT**

- Charter schools are non-profit public schools that are required to follow the same laws and regulations as school districts.
- Charter schools cannot and do not turn away students with disabilities.
- Charter schools are required to use a lottery system to enroll students.
- Charter schools are required to have certified teachers.
- As public schools, charter schools are required to offer a minimum of 180 instructional days or 900/990 instructional hours per school year.
  - o Many charter schools exceed the minimum requirements by offering more than 180 instructional days or more than 1000 hours of class time.
- Charter schools, on average, receive 25 percent less funding per student than school districts.
  - o In fact, public charter school students have lost \$100 million in funding over the last five years.
- As public schools, charter schools are required to administer the PSSAs and Keystone Exams.
- As public schools, charter schools are required to follow and adhere to the Right to Know Law.
- Charter schools receive less funding than school districts. Charter schools do not receive facility funding for their buildings and capital expenses.
- Charter schools provide high-quality academic opportunities to students in locations where school districts are failing.

### **Background on Public Charter Schools**

In 1997, the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted into law legislation that authorized the creation of alternative public schools (charter schools) to provide students and their families with opportunities to access high-quality schools and educational programs.

The Charter School Law, Act 22 of 1997, was designed to "provide pupils and community members [the opportunity] to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure," to "improve pupil learning; increase learning opportunities for all [students]; encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site; provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and hold the schools established under this act accountable for meeting measurable academic standards and provide the school with a method to establish accountability systems."