

# State of Industry Report Charter Schools

## History of Charter Schools:

**1970s** - The term "charter" may have originated in the 1970s when New England educator Ray Budde suggested that small groups of teachers be given contracts or "charters" by their local school boards to explore new approaches.

**late 1980s** - 1980s Philadelphia started a number of schools-within-schools called them "charters."

**1988** – Citizens League, a Minnesota think tank, prepared and approved a report promoting Charter Schools – Charter schools = choices for educators + quality for all students

**1991** – first charter school law passed in Minnesota – opportunity, choice, and responsibility for results

**1992** – California followed suit

**1995** – 19 states signed laws for charter schools creation

**2005** – report in October states 3,617 charter schools open with 90 more projected to open for school year 2006-2007 with a total of 1,074,809 students enrolled in 40 states and D.C.

\*\*\*Charter schools are one of the fastest growing innovations in education policy, enjoying broad bipartisan support from governors, state legislators, and past and present secretaries of education.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Since 1994, the U.S. Department of Education has provided grants to support states' charter school efforts, starting with \$6 million in fiscal year 1995.\*\*\*

## Reason for Charter School:

\*choice, accountability, freedom

\*provide a different way of approaching education from the 'traditional school'

\*recognize and support different children with different learning styles working on different 'time clocks' – ADAPT for the students

\*public school serving all children

\*licensed educators, state approved curriculum

- \*increase of parent involvement
- \*traditional schools ‘failing’ the students – this publicly funded charter school will raise the bar for all schools, therefore, raising standards for all - an alternative, especially with NCLB Act
- \*anyone can be a founder of a charter school
- \*by law – each charter school has a board of directors – usually made up of parents

### **Important Information**

- \*stronger laws produce stronger charter schools
- \*AYP – annual yearly progress – every school has certain tests to pass to meet AYP, if not, the school is put on probation – if it happens two years in a row, parents have a choice of sending their child to another school at the school’s expense
- \*NCLB – disputes about passing tests and meeting standards
- \*problem in measuring achievement and comparing results with public traditional schools

### **Interview with Charter School Classroom Teacher: Cynthia Murati (personal communication, June 27, 2006)**

- \*more parent involvement – even down to hiring of teachers and ‘interviewing’ for following year’s teacher, deciding math text
- \*follows district curriculum
- \*school wide leveled math block
- \*art theme – art for an hour once a week
- \*rearranging of funds – ex. no copy paper purchased, on supply list for students, no buses – students walk, portables pieced together

### **For-Profit Charter Schools vs. Non-Profit Charter Schools**

- \*for-profit also known as education management organizations (EMO)
- \*EMOs – corporate staffs outside the schools building making decisions for the individual schools
- \*EMO pros – access to capital for R&D, incentives to invest in R&D, curricular, instructional, and programmatic diversity, internal control, incentives to improve student performance, ‘compliments school districts’, responsive to clientele,
- \*EMO cons – removal of financial resources, business behavior – profits before students, attempt the lowest cost, but not maximize students’ output, corporations solely exist to make a profit, may turn away students who are more expensive to educate (special ed., emotional & behavioral students), misguided focus, lack of knowledge
- \*For-profit organization examples: Edison Schools (<http://www.edisonschools.com/home/home.cfm>), Business Coalition for Education Reform ([http://www.edutopia.org/php/orgs.php?id=ORG\\_307115](http://www.edutopia.org/php/orgs.php?id=ORG_307115))

\*Non-profit organization examples: Coalition of Essential Schools (<http://www.essentialschools.org>), The Center for Education Reform (<http://www.edreform.com/index.cfm?fuseAction=section&pSectionID=5>),

### **Cyber Charter Schools**

- \*not the traditional 'brick-n-mortal' school – online/virtual
- \*excellent support for home school families and those with geographical boundaries
- \*attract students wanting an independent, self-directed education

### **Into the Future**

- \*more Cyber Charter Schools
- \*increase number of charter schools throughout the nation
- \*other states joining the charter school movement by passing laws of acceptance
- \*states improving charter school law to improve current charter schools

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