

The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) is a 74+ school membership organization that is committed to ensuring that children and families of the Commonwealth have access to high-quality public schools. As the voice of one of the nation's highest-performing charter public school sectors, MCPSA engages in public policy advocacy, communications, and best practice sharing and training aimed at strengthening educational programming.

## **MISSION**

MCPSA's mission is to create and protect the conditions that will enable the charter public school sector to thrive, and advance the larger goal of ensuring all Massachusetts children and families have equitable access to high-quality schools.

## **HISTORY**

Charter public schools, authorized by the Education Reform Act of 1993, are an important part of Massachusetts public school system. Since the fall of 1995, the Massachusetts charter school sector has grown from an initial cohort of 15 schools to over 74 programmatically diverse schools across the state. Charter public schools are public, tuition-free and have enrollment processes that treat all students equally. Charter public schools in Massachusetts currently serve over 43,000 students, preparing them for the future with the belief that all students deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## **AUTONOMY**

Charter public schools operate under five-year "charters" granted by the Commonwealth's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which provide a greater deal of autonomy than traditional district schools. Charter public schools have greater flexibility in how they approach key areas of school life, including: curriculum design, staffing, teacher leadership, professional development, and school culture.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

In return for increased autonomy, charter public schools are held to the highest standards of accountability. They are assessed for renewal every 5 years by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. They are managed by public boards of trustees, subject to annual financial audits as well as state audits, and they are governed by the same laws and rules as district public schools.

## **RESULTS**

The best public education systems support all kids in reaching their full potential, and charter public schools are part of the formula that has given Massachusetts the top-performing public school system in the country. Data continue to show that students that attend charter public schools in MA show higher rates of college enrollment and persistence compared to their district public school peers. Moreover, a 2015 study by the nonpartisan CREDO research center at Stanford University concluded that children in MA's charter public schools gained an additional one and a half months of learning in reading and an additional two and a half months of learning in math per year (or for every year they attended a charter), compared to similar students in district public schools. In Boston, CREDO found that charter public schools provided students with 12 and 13 months additional learning time annually in reading and math, respectively.