

The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) is a 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 public education statewide.

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 access to high-quality schools.

HISTORY

Charter public schools, authorized by the Education Reform Act of 1993, are an important part of the Massachusetts public school system. Charter public schools are public, tuition-free and open to all. Each with a unique mission, charter public schools all across the Commonwealth deploy varied approaches to meet local needs and provide valued alternatives within the public education system. Due to statewide attendance caps paired with high demand from families, admission is determined by random lottery; there are no entrance exams or admissions requirements. Charter public schools in Massachusetts currently serve over 46,000 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. These charters provide a greater deal of autonomy than traditional district schools are afforded. Charter public schools have greater flexibility in how they approach key areas, including: curriculum design, staffing, teacher leadership, professional development, and school culture. This flexibility allows for innovative and creative approaches in the classroom, from early college to experiential learning and beyond.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Along with 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 typically made up of community members and local families, 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, as compared to their district public school peers. Moreover, a 2023 study by the nonpartisan CREDO research center at Stanford University concluded that children in Massachusetts charter public schools gained an additional 41 days, or nearly 2 additional months, of learning in reading and math per year, compared to similar students in district public schools.

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