

Charter Schools Empower Parents, Teachers and Students

What are public charter schools? Available to all students, they are innovative public schools, designed by educators and civic leaders that are free from much of the bureaucracy that stifles traditional public schools.

The greatest threat to charter schools in Kentucky is not the opposition from parents or educators, but teachers' unions. Unions fear that public charters will start a trend toward privatizing education, which is false. In fact, public charter schools simply lessen the level of bureaucratic control and regulation with which traditional schools are faced. On a recent edition of KET's Kentucky Tonight, Sharon Oxendine of the Kentucky Education Association expressed her opposition to charter schools almost solely on the basis of how charter schools will affect existing schools.

Let's review some facts about allowing public charter schools in Kentucky:

- Contrary to the KEA or the Jefferson County Teachers Association, it does not matter whether public charter schools meet the approval of teachers' unions. The question is: Do parents want charter schools? To that question, the answer is clearly, "Yes."
- It does not matter how public charter schools affect other public schools. All that matters is whether public charter schools benefit students.
- Public charter schools are subject to a higher degree of accountability. Traditional public schools are not. If a public charter school does not perform, it is closed. When was the last time a public school was closed for underperforming?

According to The Center for Education Reform (CER), there has been a 21 percent surge in parental demand for charters over the last year. In Texas alone, it is estimated that 40,000 children are on waiting lists for charter schools.

According to Jeanne Allen, President of The Center for Educational Reform:

"Charter schools and school choice demonstrate what's working in American education. When provided with good choices, parents make informed decisions and select the best schools for their children. Lawmakers should listen to their constituents and expand access to charter schools by allowing multiple authorities to create schools, ensuring fiscal equity, allowing schools to operate with more freedom, and lifting arbitrary caps on the number of schools permitted to open."

The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) study in 2009 on public charter schools is hailed by critics of charter schools as conclusive proof that charter schools have negligible effect on students. This is incorrect. Page 32 of the CREDO report admits that—over time—students are likely to display educational improvement at a faster pace than their counterpart in a traditional public school setting.

Consider: Kentucky is one of only nine states without public charter schools. Can Kentucky afford NOT to give public charter schools a chance?

Vote "Yes" on HB77!

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