

Colorado Charter Schools: Myth vs. Fact

MYTH Some or all Colorado charter schools are private schools.

FACT **There is no such thing as a private charter school.** All Colorado charter schools are public, nonreligious, open to all, cannot charge tuition, and cannot screen students.¹

MYTH Colorado charter public schools are not as accountable as other public schools.

FACT Charter public schools in Colorado are **just as if not more accountable** than every other public school in the state. All charter public schools are governed by performance contracts and must answer regularly not only to their district board but to their individual charter school board as well.²

MYTH Charter public schools in Colorado have an unfair advantage because they play by an entirely different set of rules.

FACT Colorado charter public schools **are accountable to the same standards and assessments** as all other public schools in the state. School districts in Colorado can waive out of virtually all the same statutory provisions charter schools can.³

MYTH Colorado charter public schools are not transparent with taxpayer dollars.

FACT All charter public schools in Colorado **are subject to the same “Public School Financial Transparency Act”** as every school district in the state, requiring them to regularly post detailed financial information online for public access.⁴

MYTH Colorado charter public schools raise private dollars in a way traditional public schools cannot.

FACT **Charter public schools and school districts alike can accept gifts, grants and donations** from outside benefactors. Districts report nearly \$44 million from foundations and contributions from private donations, an amount that dwarfs the \$14 million charter schools report from similar sources.⁵

MYTH Charter public schools are “privatizing” and/or “corporatizing” public education in Colorado.

FACT **Under Colorado law, charter public schools are prohibited from being organized as anything but nonprofit organizations.** Less than three percent of Colorado charter public schools contract with education management organizations for service delivery within their schools.⁶

MYTH Charter public schools don’t serve the same types of students as other public schools.

FACT In most all respects, **charter public schools serve a statewide student population that is just as diverse as non-charters.** Colorado charter public schools currently enroll students of color and English Language Learners at higher rates than the state’s traditional public schools.⁷

Learn more about charter public schools at www.CharterPublic.org.

For additional information, please contact Dan Schaller at dschaller@coloradoleague.org or 303-989-5356 ext. 105

1 CRS 22-30.5-104(1) and CRS 22-30.5-104(3)

2 CRS 22-30.5-110

3 CRS 22-30.5-104(6)(c) and CRS 22-2-117(1)(b)

4 CRS 22-44-301

5 The Colorado League of Charter schools obtained and analyzed all revenues flowing to districts and charter schools in FY2014-2015 from CDE. Districts reported nearly \$43.9 million in contributions from foundations and private donations. Meanwhile, charter schools in the state reported about \$14.2 million in revenue from foundations and private contributions. While some charter schools can and do solicit donations from private sources, the same is clearly true for school districts. While charter schools raise more private dollars per pupil, this accounts for only about \$85 per pupil in additional funding for charter schools, an amount that is dwarfed by a \$2,500 statewide per pupil funding advantage for districts.

6 CRS 22-30.5-104(4)(a)

7 <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/20160719stateofcharterupdated>