

# Understanding California Charter Schools

## By the Numbers

**CA:** Second state to pass a charter school law, and state with the most charter schools and charter school students.

**1992:** Year the California Charter Schools Act was approved.

**630,000:** Estimated number of students attending charter schools in CA.

**1,275:** Charter schools in CA

For more information, visit:  
[www.ccsa.org/understanding](http://www.ccsa.org/understanding)

## California's charter schools are...

**Public, Tuition-Free, and Open to All:** Charter schools are tuition-free, independently-run, non-profit, public schools that are open to all children, regardless of background or disability.

**Results-Driven:** Charter schools are transforming the lives of students by helping them unlock their full academic potential. Studies show charter students are making greater academic progress than their peers in traditional district schools.

**Accountable:** In exchange for more flexibility in how they deliver educational programs, charters must meet high standards of accountability to their families, the state and federal government. Charter schools must also meet rigorous academic, financial, and managerial standards.

**Empowering Parents:** Charter public schools provide parents with more options for their child's education, allowing parents to choose the learning environment they feel is best for their child.

**Safe:** Charter public schools are committed to providing a safe, structured, nurturing environment for students so they can focus on what matters most: their learning.

**Partners in Education:** Charter schools create a strong partnership between students, parents, and teachers that puts learning first. Charter schools make it possible for families to be more deeply involved in their child's education.

**Student-Centered:** Charter schools are given more flexibility to develop custom education programs to meet each student's unique needs.

**Critical to California's Education System:** Charter public schools have an important role to play among the range of school options for parents. Whether public, private, religious, or trade, more strong schools tailored to the needs of children means more places where kids can get a great education, build skills, and develop the confidence to succeed in life.

**Diverse:** California's charter school students are diverse and reflect their communities. As of the 2016-17 school year:

Student Demographic	Charter Public School % Enrollment	Traditional District School % Enrollment
African American	8%	5%
Latino	51%	55%
Asian	5%	9%
White	28%	23%
Other	8%	7%
English Learner	17%	22%
Free or Reduced	59%	62%
Students with Disabilities*	10%	11%

\*Percentage of 2016 CAASPP test-takers; may not be a direct reflection of actual enrollment

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