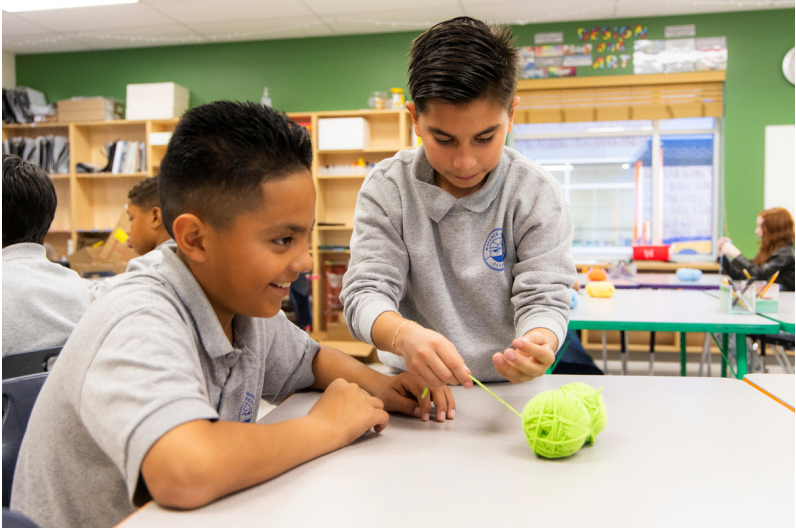




UTAH ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS



CHARTER SCHOOLS IN UTAH



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE NEED

Basic Facts



85,000 students

- 13% of all public ed students
- 38% ethnic minority
- 28% economically disadvantaged



While K-12 enrollment statewide is declining, charter school enrollment continues to increase. Growth is projected at 4% for 2026-27.



150 campuses are part of 116 LEAs

- CMOs are uncommon
- Less than 15% have multiple campuses
- 60% suburban
- 35% urban
- 5% rural

In any given year, US News and World Report's rankings identify 5-6 charter schools in Utah's top 10 high schools.

- Beehive Science and Technology Academy
- AMES (Academy of Math, Engineering, and Science)
- NUAMES (Northern Utah Academy of Math, Engineering and Science)
- UCAS (Utah County Academy of Sciences)
- Success Academy
- Karl G. Maeser Preparatory Academy
- Itineris Early College High School

Charter School Characteristics



Free, Public, Open to All



Schools of Choice (market-driven)

- No students are assigned to attend a charter school
- Have to appeal to parents



Funding

- Funded by the state on per pupil basis
- Lose student=lose funding



No taxing authority



Controlled and governed by their own school board

- Contract, or “charter,” negotiated with the authorizer
- Authorizers defined by law and approved by State Board of Education



Follow the same laws, rules, and regulations as school districts, with a few exceptions

- This sometimes conflicts with a school's charter.

Charter schools come in many shapes & sizes.



The largest charter school, American Preparatory Academy (APA), has over 5,000 students.

Largely a suburban phenomenon in Utah, though also exist in urban and rural settings.

The smallest charter schools have less than 200 students.

Online, hybrid and traditional brick-mortar

Innovation is often the central focus, but fundamentally charter schools must appeal to parents and children.

Charter school funding

\$ Charter schools have no taxing authority.

\$ State funding

- Funding from the MSP (WPU, programs, etc.) effectively on the same basis as school districts.
- Some state restricted funding streams may create tension with the mission established in a charter school contract.
- LRF (state-funded) provides for charter schools what school districts receive in property tax.

\$ Local funding

- Effectively none - see LRF above

\$ Federal funding

- Receive and qualify for federal funds the same way as school districts.



What do voters think about charter schools?



VERY popular among center right voters.



Parents want a school to match the values they teach at home

- The opt in nature of charters means they don't face the values tension between parents and the school.
- If parents don't like it, they simply leave.

Overall voter support

2019

63% OF ALL VOTERS



2023

63% OF ALL VOTERS



Parents considering charter schools

2019

38% OF PARENTS



2023

47% OF PARENTS





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Charter school authorizers

Evaluate whether a proposed charter school should open.

Enter a performance contract with the schools they approve for their portfolio.

Authorizers should revoke the contract for schools that do not live up to their contract.

- "Closing a charter school is a feature not a bug."

Permissible authorizers:

- State Charter School Board (>90% of Utah charter schools)
- Public institutions of higher education
- School districts



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Center for the School of the Future
UtahStateUniversity.



Building & financing a charter school building

- New charter schools have no assets or access to credit.
- State does NOT back charter school debt with its full faith and credit.
- New schools must partner with a developer and lease until they can purchase.
- Charter schools pay higher interest.

After opening and establishing credit, charter schools access the muni-bond market through a conduit issuer, typically the Charter School Finance Authority.



Charter school finance authority

Membership

- Chaired by State Treasurer
 - Appointee of the State Superintendent
 - Head of Governor's budget office
- Provide market access to the muni-bond market
 - Usually happens between 18 months and 5 years after school opens

Can give moral obligation to high performing charter schools

- Moral obligation program saves individual charter schools about \$2M - \$3M over the term of the bond
- CSFA has provided moral obligations for about \$500M in bonds, saving \$100M over the life of those bonds



ADM: Average Daily Membership

The metric used to calculate student attendance and enrollment over the academic year, which determines how state funding is distributed to local school districts and charter schools.

LEA: Local Education Agency

The local authority (school district or charter school) that has administrative, operational, and financial control over public K-12 schools.

LRF: Local Replacement Fund

A state funding calculation established by the Legislature to provide charter schools with equalized per-student funding in place of local property tax revenues traditional school districts collect.

OCTOBER 1

Date a student enrollment census is recorded to establish per-pupil funding.

SCSB: State Charter School Board

The largest charter school authorizer in the state.

SIS: Student Information System

School SIS platforms allow schools to track attendance, grades, etc..

SPED: Special Education

Services a school provides for students with a health or learning disability.

USB: Utah State Board of Education

Elected body of representatives for 15 districts. They serve 4 year terms.

WPU: Weighted Pupil Unit

An amount of money the Legislature uses to determine how much each public school receives largely based on enrollment and student characteristics.



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Questions?

Royce Van Tassell, Executive Director, UAPCS

- royce@utahcharters.org
- (801) 836-7028

utahcharters.org

discoverutcharters.org

**Lincoln Fillmore, Director of Communication and
Engagement, State Charter School Board**

- lincoln.fillmore@charterschools.utah.gov
- (801) 548-0144

ucap.schools.utah.gov

