



Charter public schools are public schools first, serving the public interest.

- ▶ Charter public schools are open to all, with no entrance exams.
- ▶ 35 Charter public schools serve 17,000 public school students across Illinois.
- ▶ 75% of charter public school students come from low-income families.
- ▶ 94% of Chicago's charter public school students are African American or Latino.

Charter public schools are measured by the same academic standards as all other public schools, and they consistently exceed those standards.

- ▶ Over two-thirds of charter public school teachers are state-certified, while the remaining are drawn to charter public schools from all walks of life, with at least a bachelor's degree, five years of professional experience, and successful completion of state exams of basic skills and relevant subject matter.
- ▶ Charter public school teachers receive twice as much ongoing training as other public school teachers.
- ▶ All K-8 charter public schools in Chicago posted higher combined scores on statewide tests of reading, math and science (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) than neighboring traditional schools (2004-05).
- ▶ All charter public high schools in Chicago scored better on statewide tests of reading and math (Prairie State Achievement Test) than neighboring traditional schools (2004-05).

Charter public schools root their success in meaningful community engagement and academic autonomy, which allows administrators and teachers to adapt curricula to meet student needs.

- ▶ Charter public schools are governed by non-profit boards of directors that include local parents, teachers, and community leaders who understand their needs.
- ▶ Charter public schools do not offer cookie-cutter approaches handed down from a central office, but are free to innovate and adapt.
- ▶ Charter public schools have a longer school day and longer school year, with 45 minutes more instruction a day and two weeks more instruction a year in Chicago.
- ▶ Charter public schools emphasize individual student attention, with an average of only 20 students per class.
- ▶ Charter public schools understand that learning is a complex process and teaching takes an integrated approach; you can't attend to a student's academic development without being aware of her or his physical, emotional and social development as well.

The freedom to innovate is leading to some award-winning approaches recognized by Charter Up! that can serve as a model for all schools.

- ▶ Extracurricular activities aren't considered extras at Alain Locke Charter Academy, which has produced enormous gains in reading and math. In the school's award-winning extra-curricular club program, school faculty lead the clubs and integrate them with classroom learning, strengthening student-faculty rapport and harnessing students' passions.
- ▶ Noble Street Charter High School's award-winning Literacy Program combines a challenging academic curriculum with rigorous literacy and writing instruction. The school's standardized test scores, attendance rates and graduation rates are among the highest in Chicago.
- ▶ North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter School's award-winning Minority Men Exceeding the Norm (M²EN) program focuses on fostering achievement and leadership among young men of color. The result has been improved student grade point averages and fewer disciplinary referrals.
- ▶ Prairie Crossing Charter School, whose students score well into the 90th percentile on core subjects, fuses traditional education with a strong emphasis on the environment. The school's award-winning Farm to Table program teaches students about plants, animals and the interdependence of life – and has enhanced the school's ties to the community. Students grow organic foods, which they prepare and serve to their classmates once a month.

Through higher standards and innovative approaches, charter public schools are delivering lasting results.

- ▶ All charter public high schools reported higher graduation rates than neighboring schools (2005).
- ▶ Students in Chicago's charter public schools are much less likely to be truant (94.3% attendance rate) or transfer to another school (5.6% transfer out rate).
- ▶ Students in Chicago's charter public high schools are more likely to graduate (73.5%) and graduate on time (65%), and the majority (76%) went on to a two- or four-year college (2005).

Despite a strong record of serving the public interest over the past decade, charter public schools are still fighting for equal funding and an equal opportunity to serve students across Illinois.

- ▶ Charter public schools receive less funding per student than traditional public schools.
- ▶ There are almost 10,000 students on waiting lists for charter public schools, a number that is increasing every day.
- ▶ State law arbitrarily caps the number of charter public schools in Chicago.
- ▶ State law arbitrarily limits the areas of the state where communities can start their own charter public schools.

We're not competing against traditional public schools, we're preparing our kids to compete in a global marketplace.

- ▶ Charter public schools serve as beacons of innovation for the broader public education community; they are something that no school system should be without, but that will never replace traditional public schools.
- ▶ We believe that our core philosophy – greater emphasis on professional development for teachers, more classroom time, higher standards, student-centered teaching, and supporting innovative instruction – can and should be implemented in traditional public schools.

Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) is a statewide membership organization for charter public schools, with 35 member schools serving 17,000 students on 55 campuses across Illinois. As the collective voice of charter public schools, INCS' embraces its mission to promote and invigorate the charter public school model and strengthen its members' roles in quality public education systems.