



Kentucky Department of

*Our
Children,*

*Our
Commonwealth*

Education



Public Charter Schools 101

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U.S. Charter Schools

- ▶ **Laws passed in 43 states and DC**
 - Tremendous variation in states' laws
- ▶ **First law passed in MN in 1991**
- ▶ **As of 2016, more than 6,700 public charter schools. Nearly 3 million children attend public charter schools.**



What are public charter schools?

- ▶ **Public schools**
 - Publicly funded
 - Do not charge tuition
 - Open to the public
- ▶ **Organized and governed by private organizations, or state and local public entities**
- ▶ **Provided flexibility in organization and governance**
- ▶ **Held accountable for meeting student performance goals as articulated in their contracts (charters)**
- ▶ **Held accountable for how public dollars are spent**



What is a charter?

- ▶ **Performance-based contract between a public charter school and its authorizer**
- ▶ **Spells out details under which the school is governed and held accountable**



What is a charter authorizer?

- ▶ **Receives applications from charter petitioners**
- ▶ **Enters into a contract with a public charter school**
- ▶ **Ensures charter school compliance with charter contracts**
- ▶ **Renews and revokes charter contracts**



Examples of authorizers

- ▶ Local boards of education
- ▶ State boards of education
- ▶ Chief state school officers
- ▶ Higher education institutions
- ▶ Nonprofit organizations
- ▶ Independent charter boards
- ▶ Municipal governments
 - Mayor's office
 - City Council



How are charter schools funded?

- ▶ Per-pupil basis
- ▶ Receive varying percentages of state and local funding across the states
- ▶ May be awarded start-up grants
- ▶ Eligible for special federal funding for public charter schools
- ▶ May receive philanthropic donations (as traditional public schools)



Questions/Discussion

