

Charter Schools

1. Charter schools are state-funded public schools that offer students innovative educational opportunities while operating with greater flexibility than traditional public schools. Charter schools are granted a waiver of most state and local education regulations to allow them the flexibility of programming to achieve student progress equal to or above the state or District average student achievement. A charter school may also set additional achievement goals such as reducing dropout rates or increasing the number of students gaining entrance to colleges and universities. See References (a) and (b).

Types of Charter Schools

2. The two existing types of charter schools are Texas Education Agency (TEA) open-enrollment charter schools and District charter schools.

Open-Enrollment
Charter Schools

- a. Open-enrollment charter schools are autonomous public schools whose charters are granted by the Texas State Board of Education. These charter schools report directly to the TEA. Open-enrollment charter schools operate outside the jurisdiction of a local school district and are not regulated as traditional public schools. Open-enrollment charter schools receive the same per-student funding from TEA as area school districts but receive no money for facilities or start-up costs. There are currently numerous TEA open-enrollment charter schools operating in the Houston area. For a list of open-enrollment charter schools see References (d) and (f).

District Charter
Schools

- b. District charter schools are approved by the District Board of Education and operate within the jurisdiction of the District. See Reference (c). District charter schools are not regulated as traditional District public schools but must maintain a relationship to the District. District charter schools are accountable for achieving measurable educational results. In return, they receive waivers that exempt them from many of the restrictions that shape traditional public schools. For additional information including brief descriptions of the District charter schools and contract charter schools, see References (d) and (f) or go the Charter Schools Web site on HISDConnect at www.houstonisd.org (Department, Charter School Initiatives).

Types

- (1) There are four types of District charter schools. These are campus charter schools, program charter schools, cooperative program charter schools, and external campus charter schools. See References (d) and (f).

CAMPUS OR PROGRAM CHARTERS

EL
(REGULATION)

Campus Charter
Schools

(a) A District campus charter school is one in which an entire District campus petitions the Board of Education to become a charter school. The petition submitted to the Board of Education must be signed by the parents of a majority of the school's students and the majority of the school's classroom teachers. See References (a), (b), and (c).

Program Charter
Schools

(b) A District program charter school occupies a portion of an existing District school. District program charter schools service a segment of the school's student body. The petition for a program charter submitted to the Board of Education must be signed by the parents of a majority of the entire school's students and the majority of the school's classroom teachers. See References (a), (b), and (c).

Cooperative
Program Charter
Schools

(c) A District cooperative program charter school is one that permanently operates on two or more campuses in the District. The petition submitted to the Board of Education must be signed by the parents of a majority of the students at each school and the majority of the classroom teachers at each school. See References (a), (b), and (c).

External
Campus Charter
Schools

(d) A District external campus charter school is one in which the District contracts with a public or private entity to provide educational services to its student population. See References (d) and (f). The terms of the charter school's contract with District will specify every aspect of school guidelines that is to be followed. The contract between the District and the charter school will be reviewed annually. Teachers at external campus charter schools are employees of the contracting entity and are not eligible for the Texas Teacher Retirement System. These schools will only be considered as charter schools by TEA if they follow the requirement to produce petitions from the majority of the teachers and parents.

*Reporting
Relationships*

(2) The reporting relationships between the various types of charter schools and District operate at two levels within the District.

- (a) Each charter school is assigned to an administrative district within the District. The assignment is designed to provide a communications and monitoring link with each charter school to ensure compliance with required local, state, and federal guidelines.
 - (b) External campus charters will receive those services specifically stipulated within their contracts.
- 3. Charter schools operate with fewer restrictions than traditional public schools, but are still required to comply with certain federal and state requirements. See Reference (e).
 - Federal and State Requirements**
 - TAKS
 - a. All students enrolled in charter schools must complete the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test at the appropriate grade levels determined by TEA. District charter schools are also required to test students on the Stanford 10 and Aprenda 2. The TAKS, Stanford 10, and Aprenda 2 tests are used as tools in evaluating whether or not a charter school is meeting the student achievement standards outlined in its contract with District.
 - PEIMS
 - b. All charter schools must follow standard guidelines when reporting pertinent student data. Open-enrollment charter schools report their student data directly to TEA. District charter schools report student data directly to the District.
 - Special Programs
 - c. All charter schools must comply with state and federal special education, multilingual, and “no pass, no play” guidelines.
 - Health and Safety Requirements
 - d. All charter schools must comply with the appropriate state and federal health and safety codes.
 - 4. This regulation does not require consultation.
 - 5. The chief academic officer, Academic Services, is responsible for maintenance of this regulation.

REFERENCES:

- (a) Board Policy EL(LLEGAL)
 - (b) Board Policy EL(LOCAL)
 - (c) EL(EXHIBIT
 - (d) Elementary School Guidelines
 - (e) HISD Charter Schools Guidelines and Application for Campus Charter Schools
 - (f) Secondary School Guidelines
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