



Kentucky's Public Schools have a proven track record of success!

KEA believes the General Assembly should focus on funding Kentucky's system of common public schools for *all* children rather than diverting resources to a parallel system of schools. Kentucky's school employees prove every day that we are dedicated to our students. Our public school students have made great strides in achievement over the past few years and we are well on the path to assuring that every child receives a great public education.

What are Charter Schools?

There are many "charter school" models; they differ greatly from state to state. In general, charter schools are self-governing and free from some or all state laws and regulations and they receive public funds for each child they enroll. In some states only non-profit organizations can run charter schools; in others, both for-profit and non-profit organizations can run them. Some do not require teachers to be certified. They often are not subject to open records and open meeting laws and may not be subject to the same accountability standards as public schools. In short, although charter schools receive public funds and therefore, claim to be public schools, in every important respect they exist and operate like private schools.

Charter schools do not close learning gaps.

Charter schools exist in 42 states, and have existed in some of those states for 20 years. Despite that fact, learning gaps among students of different demographic groups exist and persist in every state in the country.

Students in charter schools often don't receive the same services as public school students or they receive services at the continued expense of the public school system.

The learning environment in any particular charter school is the result of contract negotiations between the charter authorizer and the charter operator. As a result, charter operators often don't provide to their select group of students the services that public schools provide to every student, i.e., support for students with disabilities, lunch, libraries, athletics, and transportation. The reason? Because providing those services costs money and requires expertise. Charters have the option to save money by cutting services to students; public schools don't have that same option. Even worse, in many states, the public school system is required to continue to provide these services for charter students, even though the public school loses money every time a student moves to a charter school. **KEA believes that charter schools should not negatively impact funding for existing public schools, which should be held harmless.**

School-Based Decision Making Provides Much that Charter Schools Promise.

In 1990, Kentucky enacted school-based decision making (SBDM) as part of KERA. Because of SBDM, parents and teachers have significant authority in every school, similar to that which charter schools promise. School councils can be creative and shape their schools to meet their community's needs, if they are allowed to reach their potential instead of being constrained. **KEA believes that our efforts should be directed toward helping school councils in every Kentucky school live up to their promise for every Kentucky student, rather than focusing on a few charter schools with a few students.**



Charter Schools weaken community involvement and oversight of public schools.

Kentucky voters have a direct influence in their schools, through the elected members of their local board of education. Parents have a hand in running their children’s schools through the elected parent representatives on school councils. Public schools are subject to open records and open meetings laws. **Charter schools provide no similar level of accountability. KEA believes that schools should maintain their transparency and electoral accountability to voters and parents in every community.**

Charter Schools can create less diverse learning environments.

Charter sponsors shape their schools to attract only one segment of the population – based on ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, or academic achievement. These segregated learning communities detract from the common vision of schools. **KEA does not support re-segregating our schools.**

Proponents boast that charter school enrollment is determined by lottery. That’s only part of the story. To be considered in the lottery, parents have to be well-informed about options available to their children and put them into the drawing. In many charter schools, parents have to commit to volunteer, make sure homework is done and come for regular conferences. **These charter schools consider only children with involved parents, who have time and money to devote to the school.**

Turnover at Charters Causes Student Learning Problems.

Charter schools are usually staffed by less experienced educators, and they usually have a high level of turnover. Charter school educators are twice as likely to leave their school in their first year as educators at public schools.

Charter school teachers and staff often do not have due process afforded other school employees. Many charter school employees are expected to work longer school days and years for less compensation which leads to a higher rate of turnover and causes instability and lack of continued education focus.

KEA believes that teacher working conditions create student learning conditions. Operating charter schools with inexperienced, uncertified, overworked, underpaid staff does not lead to student success.

