



A Policy Briefing on Charter Schools

Charter schools are established to increase learning opportunities for all students with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for academically challenged pupils. All charter school employees should be organized to ensure both quality education for students and professional rights for school employees.

Accountability and Transparency

CTA believes charter schools must comply with state required testing requirements, and laws promoting transparency and accountability to parents and the public in the operation of public schools and expenditure of public funds.

Equity and Student Access

All children in California should be entitled to equal access to all public education opportunities, including charter schools. Any practices that serve to weed out certain children or families must be eliminated. No charter school should discriminate against a student because of race, language, color, national origin, religion, gender/gender identification, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, economic status, educational need, or academic performance.

Local Control

School districts develop priorities and plans with input from all stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, and community members. Because of the significant investment in time and resources reviewing proposed charter school petitions prior to accepting or rejecting a petition, the local school board is best equipped to make decisions regarding education programs and needs within its jurisdiction. CTA believes that the granting of charters must only be through school districts with democratically elected school boards for schools within the boundaries of the school district, and that appeals to the school district's denial of a petition must be only for due process reasons. The primary function of charter schools is to establish locally-driven pedagogical innovation that supports California's system of public education, and does not replace or undermine it. Establishment of a charter school moratorium is needed to provide time to reconsider whether our current regulatory framework for charter schools is working toward this value. Increasingly, charter schools are operated by large CMOs without sufficient oversight and far from the school communities they are meant to serve.

Facilities

CTA believes that the funding of charter school facilities shall not negatively impact the education program of the school district in which the charter school is located. Additionally, CTA believes that charter schools must operate facilities consistent with the Field Act or other similar public safety standards as applied to buildings of public access similar to public schools. Educational employees are entitled to work in safe and healthy environments. Public school buildings must meet modern earthquake standards and have adequate light, heat/air conditioning, and ventilation. CTA opposes using public funds to purchase private property in the charter school environment.

Eliminating Profit Motives in Public Education

CTA believes that the approval of and operation of charter schools must be free of conflicts of interest and profiteering. Charter school board members and their immediate families must not benefit financially from their schools. Public schools' conflict of interest laws and disclosure regulations should apply to charter schools that receive public funds.