

## Facts and Myths About Charter Schools

**Myth:** Charter public schools are privately run.

**Reality:**

Charter schools are public schools and are free of charge. They are operated independent of the local school system, but are public schools overseen by public Boards of Trustees and the state.

**Myth:** Charters accept only the ‘cream of the crop’ and reject underperforming students:

**Reality:**

Unlike private schools, charter public schools do not ‘select’ their students. They are open to everyone (in GLCPS’s case, everyone in New Bedford) and if enrollment requests exceed the number of seats, the schools are required to hold a public lottery to determine who will attend.

**Myth:** Charter public schools receive more money than district public school.

**Reality:**

Charter public schools actually receive less than what districts spend to educate their students, according to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Several expenses paid by district are not included in the charter calculation because charters do not have these costs, such as health care benefits for retired teachers.

Like most public-sector entities, government funding only covers a portion of GLCPS’s operating costs. In order to ensure that our students are receiving a 21st century education, we must seek additional resources to:

- purchase advanced technology to ensure our children have access to computers
- extend the school day as necessary to meet the learning needs of our students
- tap into the exceptional resources of our Southcoast region through field studies and hands-on learning opportunities and internships
- offer summer enrichment programs that our students would otherwise not be able to afford
- complete essential facility repairs to maintain a healthy and safe school environment

For example, virtually every single computer in our building was purchased as a result of private funding thanks to generous individuals and family foundations. Expanding our fiscal resources is imperative to ensuring that GLCPS continues to offer a high quality program that prepares our students for the 21st century.

**Myth:** Charter public schools are not held accountable for performance.

**Reality:**

Charter public schools must follow the same educational standards, administer the same standardized tests (MCAS) and abide by all the same laws and regulations as other public schools. It is extremely difficult to obtain and retain a charter. In fact, charter public schools must reapply for certification every five years and are subject to annual inspections by the state. Massachusetts charter public schools are held to the highest academic standards in the country.