



Charter Schools (Public School Academies)

Public School Academies (PSAs) are also known as *charter schools*. Charter schools are public schools under the Revised School Code. Charter schools may not charge tuition and must serve anyone who applies to attend, up to the enrollment capacity. Charter schools are not private schools and cannot be associated with a religious organization.

Establishing a Charter

Charter schools must be set up by an “authorizing body” which is responsible for overseeing compliance. An authorizing body can include one of the following: public university, community college, traditional public school district (called local educational agency or LEA), or intermediate school district (ISD).

Charter schools have appointed, not elected, governing boards made up of parents, teachers, community leaders, and others involved in opening the school. Charter schools are public schools and must meet the requirements under federal and state law for all public schools. In order to provide state funding on a per student basis, the Michigan Department of Education must approve the plan developed by the charter school.

Academics at a Charter

Charter schools serve any combination of grades kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) and must enroll all students who apply. Each charter school must follow core content curriculum standards defined in Michigan and use certified teachers.

Public Schools Include Charters

Public school districts are supported by public funds and include charter schools (PSAs) and traditional school districts (LEAs). ISDs are public educational agencies organized by a single county or several counties which may provide programming (including special education programming), services, and assistance to charter schools and LEAs located within the ISD.

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Special Education Provided by Charter Schools

Under the [*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)*](#), students with disabilities attending charter schools have the same rights as those at traditional public schools including the right to a [*free appropriate public education \(FAPE\)*](#). Students may not be discriminated against when enrolling in charter schools. Charter schools, like all other public schools in Michigan, must follow state and federal requirements for students with disabilities.

Consistent with Child Find rules and regulations, a student is entitled to an evaluation for special education and related services and to receive services if found eligible. Additional information about special education requirements can be found in the [*Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)*](#).

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education released guidance on the rights of students with disabilities in charter schools which includes a [*Question and Answer*](#) document and a [*Know Your Rights*](#) fact sheet.

Resources



- [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\): Know Your Rights in Charter Schools](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education: Charter Public Schools](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education: Michigan Charter Schools - Questions and Answers](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education: Charter Schools Program](#)
- [U.S. Governmental Department of Accountability: Charter Schools - Additional Federal Attention Needed to Help Protect Access for Students with Disabilities](#)