



MCCCSA

Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers

2022-2023 Annual Report

**Choice.
Innovation.
Impact.**



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From the Chair

Dear Friends,

With nearly 300 schools serving over 150,000 students, public charter schools are an integral part of Michigan's public education system, free and open to all who apply. No tuition fees. No admissions tests. No zip code requirements. Just quality public school options that have been positively impacting the lives of tens of thousands of Michigan children for more than a quarter of a century.

Charter schools are located in every part of our state, and the students they serve come from a wide range of backgrounds. Many schools serve culturally diverse families, and nearly 80% of charter students face socioeconomic challenges. Each student has a unique story, and their education is setting a foundation for them to excel.

A hallmark of charter schools is their flexibility to differentiate curriculum, facilities, and programs. Some offer college preparatory, Montessori curriculum, fine arts, environmental sciences, and more. Some schools require uniforms, while others have longer school days, and some teach their entire curriculum in two languages. The possibilities are endless, but charter schools aim to provide a range of options so parents can choose the school that best fits their child's needs.

The public officials who govern these schools are board members who swear an oath of office. Beyond merely approving budgets and contracts, these public servants are responsible for making sure their school fulfills its missions, uses public resources wisely, and achieves positive results for students.

As authorizers, we are proud to say that Michigan is one of ten states nationally showing the best performance among charter schools. According to the most-recent Stanford University CREDO study, a student in a Michigan charter school gains an additional 36 days a year of learning in reading and an additional 24 days a year of learning in math.¹ In both the 2022 and 2023 U.S. News and World Report rankings, using a metric that looks at overall academic performance, the top five open-enrollment high schools in Detroit were charter schools.²

While charter schools are doing well nationally, *Michigan* charter schools are leading the way.

The unique role of the authorizer, the public bodies entrusted with approving, overseeing, and supporting public charter schools, remains a vital part of this effort. In 2022-23, and with the Council's expertise and leadership, Michigan authorizers opened new schools and found fresh ways to improve student outcomes, even in the face of lingering pandemic effects.

In this report, we capture the numbers, stories, and images of this challenging and rewarding work we do in fulfilling our mission to advance public education. I hope you will read it carefully and then join us in finding ways to reach even higher and do even more.



Corey Northrop

Chair, Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers
Executive Director, The Governor John Engler Center for
Charter Schools at Central Michigan University

About The Council

The Michigan Council of Charter School Authorizers (“The Council”) is a collaborative, non-profit, non-partisan professional organization dedicated to providing quality public charter school oversight.

For over a decade, The Council has coalesced and supported the public charter school authorizers, and represented the important work they do to advance educational excellence, innovation, choice, and accountability for Michigan K-12 students.

The Council’s ten members comprise its board of directors, who meet monthly to share best practices, updates, and resources, embracing a common vision based on these guiding principles:

- Choice is a necessary element in today’s system of public education.
- Quality must remain the most central focus for authorizers, school operators, and policymakers alike.
- Autonomy and innovation are essential to ensure the promise of Michigan’s public charter school movement and contribute to the success of K-12 education in general.
- Accountability is crucial. Quantifiable, data-driven results must be achieved and supported at all levels of K-12 public education.
- Public charter schools that fail to achieve adequate results pursuant to the terms of their contracts should face appropriate consequences, up to and including closure.
- Authorizers have a responsibility to provide input, advocacy, and support for public discourse on K-12 education issues.
- Policymakers and authorizers alike must ensure appropriate levels of accountability and oversight for all Michigan schools.

“Choice is a necessary element in today’s system of public education.”

Council Board Officers for 2022-2023

Chair **Corey Northrop**, Central Michigan University

Vice Chair **Mariah Wanic**, Bay Mills Community College

Secretary **Dave Lewis**, Saginaw Valley State University

Treasurer **Christopher White**, Ferris State University



How The Council Leads

Accreditation and Assurance

In 2014, The Council established the nation's first statewide public charter school authorizing accreditation and assurance process, to demonstrate the quality commitment Michigan authorizers strive to achieve.

Partnering with nationally-recognized Cognia (formerly AdvancED), The Council moved beyond the basic practice known as "continuous improvement" to create a more rigorous definition of effective authorizing.

Today, **Michigan leads the nation with its authorizer accountability system** that not only includes the Cognia standards, but also The Council's thirteen assurances, demonstrated compliance, and Michigan Department of Education assurance and verification visits.

The assurances are the first step: these standards adjust with changes in law, and must be met in order to begin accreditation. Accreditation functions typically, with documentation and review, to ensure an authorizer continually meets the standards. Every review includes recommendations for improvement and subsequent monitoring for implementation.

Central Michigan University, Detroit Public Schools Community District, Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, Lake Superior State University, Oakland University, and Saginaw Valley State University are fully accredited.

Special Education: School Supports and Interventions

The success of a public charter school depends on the quality of education services it provides to all children, with or without disabilities, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Each public charter school in Michigan provides free, appropriate, and



challenging educational opportunities to children with IDEA-eligible disabilities who are enrolled in the school. On average, about eleven percent of public charter school students have special education needs. The Council provides an online guide called, "Special Education Services in Charter Schools: What Authorizers and School Leaders Should Know." This free resource serves as a reference manual for those involved in public charter school oversight.

Authorizer Roundtables

Since the fall of 2019, The Council, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), has hosted annual statewide roundtables for all public charter school authorizers across the state.

Funded by the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant aimed at promoting high-quality authorizing, these discussions facilitate:

- Dialogue and collaboration among existing and prospective Michigan authorizers;
- Greater understanding of authorizer needs by organizations working to support them; and
- Technical assistance for all Michigan authorizing bodies, regardless of Council membership.

Roundtables held in August and September of 2022 involved more than 41 participants, 30 authorizers – both Council (12) and non-Council (18) – and representatives from MDE, Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA), and the National Charter Schools Institute (NCSI) along with a Council facilitator.

The August roundtable, intended solely for local authorizers, included a presentation from Naomi Norman, Washtenaw ISD superintendent and authorizer, and Meg Hackett of Thrun Law, attorney for several district and ISD authorizers, explaining the authorizer role and honing in on these questions:

- What relationships do you have with your charter school as their authorizer?
- How does authorizing your charter school enhance your district? Or doesn't it?
- Do you have an authorizer policy statement? If not, should you and what might you include?

- What have you learned from the charter school that you are sharing with your district?

Based on feedback from previous roundtables, the September roundtable focused on MDE Assurance and Verification Review, including:

- General updates from the department;
- MDE updates about the Assurance and Verification Review process;
- Presentation from Mark Weinberg, NCSI, for strategies to successfully complete the review; and
- Resource-sharing including the Council's best practice guides, NCSI Aspiring Charter School Leader Program, NCSI Board Network, and MAPSA Mastermind and Symposium.

Best Practice Guides

Harnessing their 25-plus years of expertise in quality public charter school authorizing, **The Council provides Recognized Best Practice Guides with online tools and resources to help authorizers and aspiring authorizers perfect their craft.** Using federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant monies, The Council makes these guides available on their website for free in order to support all authorizers. Topics range from academic oversight to board governance, evaluation, and more. Complimentary resources include education service provider policy templates, review sheets, and other tools to support and sustain high-quality authorizing practices.

University Value-Add

University authorizers **leverage campus resources to benefit their public charter school communities** in a number of ways:

- Administrator professional development
- College credit opportunities
- College exposure
- College preparation/advising
- Educator degree awards
- Faculty-teacher partnerships
- Research
- School board professional development
- Student scholarships
- Student summer camps/outreach programs
- Teacher preparation/placement
- Teacher professional development

“The success of a public charter school depends on the quality of education services it provides to all children.”

Authorizer Funding & School Financial Support

State law allows authorizers to collect up to three percent of the state funding allotted to their public charter schools. Funds collected are used for oversight and support functions, to ensure that all legal, regulatory, and performance measures are met. The vast majority of authorizers, however, collect only a portion of the state aid to which they are entitled, leaving millions of dollars for their schools to use.

Authorizers also typically invest a significant portion of their own operational fees in their schools, via numerous supports and services.

In 2022-2023, Council authorizers gave back over \$7.5 million.

Here's where the money went:

Authorizer fee discount	\$2,302,519
School grants/awards	\$1,978,868
Student scholarships	\$270,725
Testing support	\$601,736
Compliance and accountability support	\$543,289
Board development	\$388,015
Educator professional development/continuing education	\$1,111,403
Board policy services	\$201,325
Business manager professional development	\$50,720
Other	\$179,268
Total	\$7,627,868

Other areas of financial support included camps, campus visits and college resource programming, educator awards, employee verification, instructional training, school supplies, school support services, and outreach.

Practitioner Workgroups

To share information and best practices, three Council workgroups meet several times a year on academics (including special education), finance, and governance. These workgroups host legal and regulatory experts, such as the state departments of Education and Treasury, to ensure authorizers are up-to-date on current laws and policies and to build strong working relationships across sectors and networks. The workgroups also provide a valuable peer network for problem-solving and capacity-building within authorizer teams.



An Authorizer's Work

Academic Performance

State law explicitly requires public charter schools to contract with their authorizers, and these legally binding agreements define and protect a school's autonomy and governing authority, while clearly specifying performance expectations and conditions for renewal.

Academic oversight is an authorizer's paramount focus.

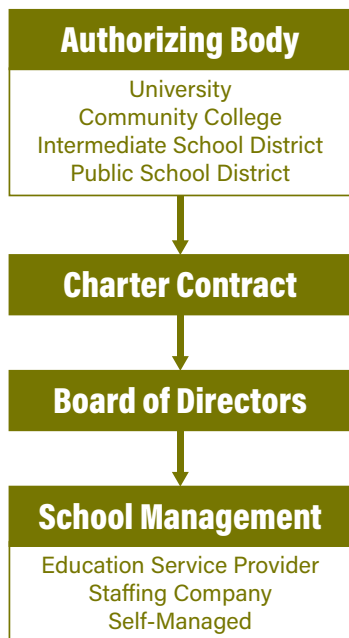
In 2022-2023, Michigan public charter schools averaged 57.1 on the Michigan School Index System³, despite far outpacing the statewide average for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)⁴ student populations:

- Public charter school FRL: 78.6%
- Statewide FRL: 53.2%
- Non-charter FRL: 50.1%

Public charter schools in Detroit outperformed their counterparts on the state system:

- Detroit charter average: 49.1
- Detroit average: 48.3
- Detroit non-charter average: 47.7

Also, forty-one (41) public charter schools ranked in the top 25th, thirty-five (35) in the top 20th, and twenty-two (22) in the top 10th percentile on the state system.



Fiscal Performance

The expectation for public charter schools to be fiscally solvent is spelled out in their contracts and required by law.

Council authorizers have developed rigorous processes to review quarterly and audited financial statements in order to identify financial challenges and help schools make adjustments to avoid a deficit. For public charter schools, a deficit likely will lead to a notice of intent to revoke the contract and a requirement that the school create a corrective action plan, which includes a deficit elimination plan required by law. The number of public charter schools in deficit has declined significantly over the years thanks to these proactive practices.

Reporting Compliance and Oversight

During the 2022-23 school year, Council **authorizers processed a total of 23,905 compliance items** related to school operations and support.⁵ Examples include transparency reporting, measures of academic progress, teacher certification, special education reviews, quarterly financial statements, audited financial statements, student counts, school schedules, board meeting schedules, budgets, and more.

Law/Policy Implementation

Authorizers ensure the schools in their portfolios properly implement new laws or policies enacted at the state and federal levels. In this regard, public charter schools are subjected to an extra layer of accountability, compared to their conventional school counterparts, due to the legally binding performance contracts that authorizers administer.

“Council authorizers have developed rigorous processes to review quarterly and audited financial statements in order to identify financial challenges and help schools make adjustments to avoid a deficit.”

Who Authorizes in Michigan?

Universities

Central Michigan University
 Eastern Michigan University
 Ferris State University
 Grand Valley State University
 Lake Superior State University
 Northern Michigan University
 Oakland University
 Saginaw Valley State University

Community Colleges

Bay Mills Community College
 Jackson College
 Washtenaw Community College

Intermediate School Districts

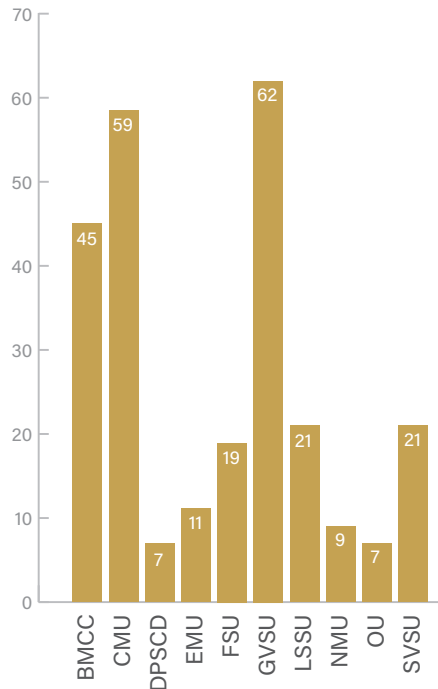
Allegan Area Educational Service Agency
 Bay-Arenac ISD
 C.O.O.R. ISD
 Eaton RESA
 Hillsdale ISD
 Iosco RESA
 Kalamazoo RESA
 Macomb ISD
 Manistee ISD
 Midland County Educational Service Agency
 St. Clair County RESA
 Washtenaw ISD
 Wayne RESA
 West Shore Educational Service District

Local School Districts

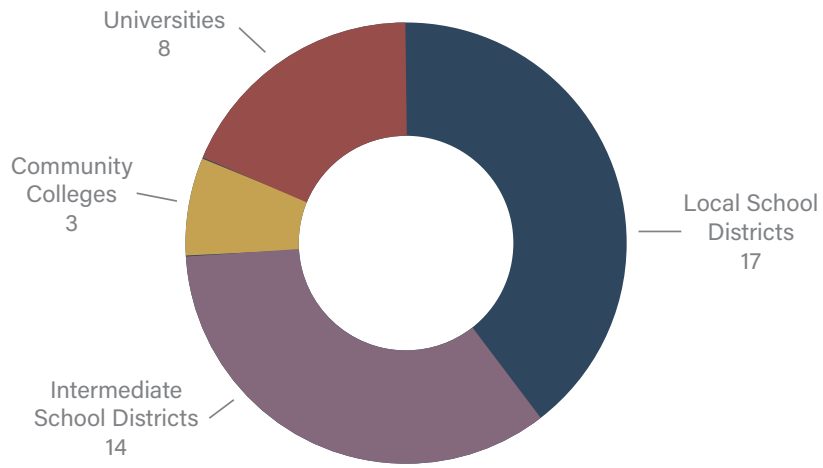
Center Line Public Schools
 Detroit Public Schools Community District
 Eaton Rapids Public Schools
 Gobles Public School District
 Grand Rapids Public Schools
 Hazel Park School District
 Highland Park City Schools
 Madison District Public Schools
 Manistee Area Public Schools
 Mesick Consolidated Schools
 Muskegon Heights School District
 Ovid-Elsie Area Schools
 Oxford Community Schools
 Port Huron Area School District
 Stephenson Area Public Schools
 Vestaburg Community Schools
 Whitmore Lake Public School District

Schools Authorized by Council Members

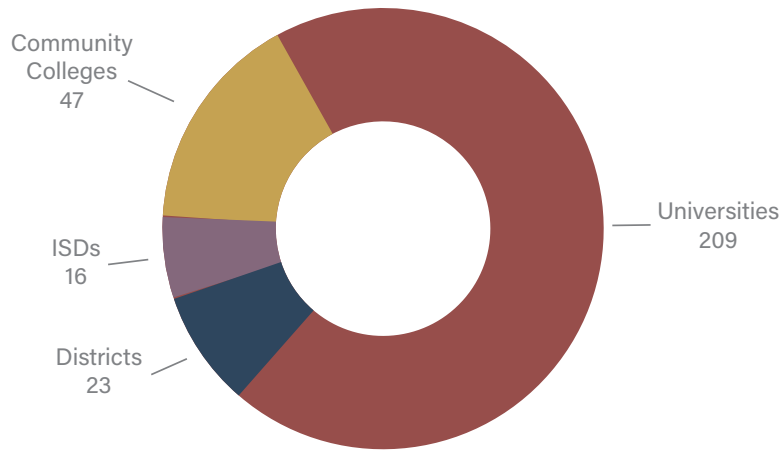
261 Total



Authorizer Types



Schools by Authorizer Type





School Opening

KIPP Detroit Imani Academy

Detroit, MI

Authorized by Central Michigan University

School Profile

- Grades Offered: K (expanding to K-12)
- Student Enrollment: 34
- Economically Disadvantaged: 88%
- Location: Wayne County

Located in the Cody Rouge community, KIPP Detroit Imani Academy is the first Michigan school to be part of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), one of the highest-performing charter school networks in the country. With 270 schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia, KIPP schools are nationally-renowned for their emphasis on high standards and college attendance. KIPP high schools boast a 94% graduation rate, and their alumni are over four times as likely to graduate from college as their peers.

Founded and led by Candace Rogers, a Detroit native, KIPP Detroit Imani Academy is committed to academic excellence, racial equity, and community. The school mission is to create joyful and identity-affirming schools where students achieve excellent and equitable academic outcomes, thereby ensuring their preparation to pursue any path they choose — college, career, and beyond — so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world. Offering kindergarten in its first year, the academy is adding a grade every year to become a K-12 school.

Opportunity

School Opening New Dawn Academy

Warren, MI

Authorized by Saginaw Valley State University

School Profile

- Grades Offered: K-8
- Student Enrollment: 76
- Economically Disadvantaged: 92%
- Location: Macomb County

Part of the successful Education Management & Networks (“EMAN”) network of charter schools, New Dawn Academy of Warren features a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) curriculum and a commitment to providing equitable access to high quality STEM pathways for diverse children. By cultivating a family of students and staff who solve problems through collaboration, innovation, passion, patience and empathy, EMAN schools are able to achieve such goals.

The school's curriculum is aligned with Michigan academic standards and delivered with English and native language support. In addition, New Dawn seeks community partnerships from the Society of Automotive Engineers and other local stakeholders to provide a robust STEM program in a brand new, state-of-the-art facility.

Students, staff, parents and graduates have multiple avenues to contribute to the betterment of human culture through intellectual, scientific, and artistic endeavors designed to create a more peaceful coexistence. The goal is to develop compassionate critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and well-rounded participants in local and world affairs. New Dawn Academy is a school where cultural diversity and global awareness are both valued and nurtured.





School Opening

Pittsfield Acres Academy

Ypsilanti, MI

Authorized by Ferris State University

School Profile

- Grades Offered: K-8
- Student Enrollment: 301
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 19.93% Free, 11.3% Reduced
- Location: Houghton County

Part of the high-performing Global Educational Excellence (GEE) network of charter schools, Pittsfield Acres Academy is a multicultural public charter school focused on educating the whole child in a nurturing environment that includes after school and tutoring programs.

The curriculum gives students the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects, including English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, PE, technology, art, and music. All students also receive Arabic language education.

GEE schools have a two-track Arabic program that serves Arabic language learners and heritage students, with a curriculum that consists of well-designed content and culture integration for grades K-12, multi-level materials for Arabic language learners, and extensive training and professional development for teachers.

The goal of the academic program is to encourage each student to reach his or her maximum learning potential in all subject areas and to acquire the skills necessary to be a well-rounded person on the path towards a successful educational and professional career. Pittsfield Acres Academy achieves this level of excellence by providing an instructional program that directly meets the needs of every student.

Believing that character education is a basic ingredient in the education process, the academy also emphasizes appreciation, commitment, cooperation, curiosity, empathy, integrity, respect, responsibility, and tolerance as key traits for the development of responsible citizenship. These character traits are taught and practiced throughout the school year in a variety of specific lessons and settings.

School Opening

SER YouthBuild Learning Academy

Detroit, MI

Authorized by Detroit Public Schools Community District

School Profile

- Grades Offered: High school
- Student Enrollment: 175
- Economically Disadvantaged: 81%
- Location: Wayne County

The SER YouthBuild Learning Academy (SYLA) was converted from an existing credit-recovery program operated by SER-Metro Detroit, and is an alternative high school serving students ages 14-21 who have experienced disruption in their high school careers due to challenges in other school environments. With two campuses in metro-Detroit, SYLA gives these students a chance to re-enter high school and earn a diploma.

The academy has always been driven by a mission to serve youth that need to complete their degree, connect to a vocation or career path, and develop a long-term strategy for success. Tailored to students' individual academic needs, SYLA provides classroom instruction by certified teachers and the chance to learn a trade while in school. Upon program completion, students receive their high school diploma and are eligible to participate in DPSCD's formal graduation ceremony.

Harnessing its partnerships with U.S. Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, Michigan Works!, United Way, and many others for a variety of grants, programming, and apprenticeships in the building trades industry, SYLA offers a chance for learners to gain knowledge, skills, and self-discipline needed to succeed in the world.



Council School Boards

Board Member Appointment Process

Quality governance is one of the foundations of high performing schools, and **authorizers have established rigorous processes for making qualified public charter school board appointments.**

Prospective candidates must be nominated by a school board, complete an application for board service, undergo extensive vetting, and pass a criminal history background check. If appointed by the authorizer, they must swear an Oath of Public Office at the first meeting following their appointment. The Oath must be administered in the presence of a Notary Public and filed with the authorizing office.

Board Member Professional Development

Council authorizers provide regular enrichment opportunities for school board members, and many require participation in new member orientations and ongoing professional development. **Training sessions on academics, fiscal oversight, good governance, and a host of other topics equip board members to fulfill their oaths of office and lead their schools effectively.** A number of Council authorizers pool their resources to provide professional development webinars to board members located across the state, and others maintain timely and pertinent online resources to educate members on topics that affect their boards.

258 Boards

1,276 Board members

194 New board members appointed 2022-23

2,519 Board meetings per year

63% of board members have served 3 years+

234 Founding board members

61% of board members hold bachelor's degrees or higher

35% of board members hold a master's or doctorate degree

School Management

Michigan's public charter schools utilize a variety of management structures to ensure well-run operations in their school buildings.

Education Service Providers (ESP) & Charter Management Organizations (CMO)

In most instances, public charter school boards contract with an ESP or CMO to supply some or all of the necessary educational, financial, and personnel services. The board holds the ESP/CMO accountable to the terms of a contract, and does not provide human resource functions. Typically, the ESP/CMO handles daily managerial decisions.

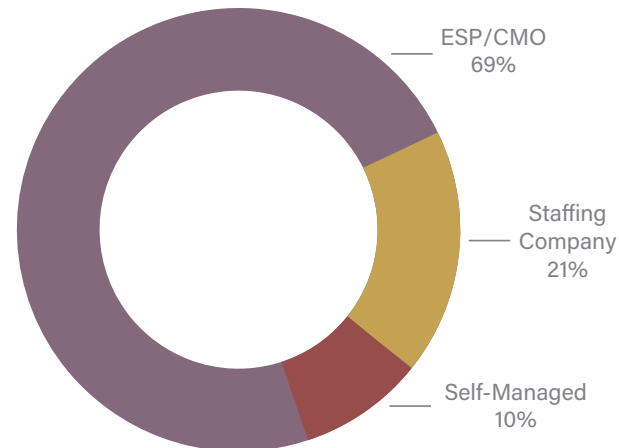
Staffing Companies

These providers contract with a public charter school board to supply staffing and some limited managerial services. The board does not provide human resource tasks, but oversees a contract with the provider who employs the staff. The board typically works in partnership with the provider on daily managerial issues.

Self-Managed Schools

Under this management structure, a public charter school board relies on administration and employees they hire directly, and the school operates similarly to a conventional district in terms of human resources and managerial decisions.

Council Schools' Management



About Michigan Charter Schools

What is a public charter school?

Public charter schools are free, independently operated schools that have the flexibility and autonomy to meet their students' needs. They have existed in Michigan since 1994, and they operate under legally binding charter contracts issued by public authorizing bodies (universities, community colleges, school districts, or intermediate school districts).

Public charter schools may not charge tuition, and must accept all students who apply, up to their enrollment capacity. This means they are prohibited from screening students based on race, religion, sex, or educational ability, and must randomly select students for admission if the number of applicants exceeds available space. They may not be religiously affiliated.⁶

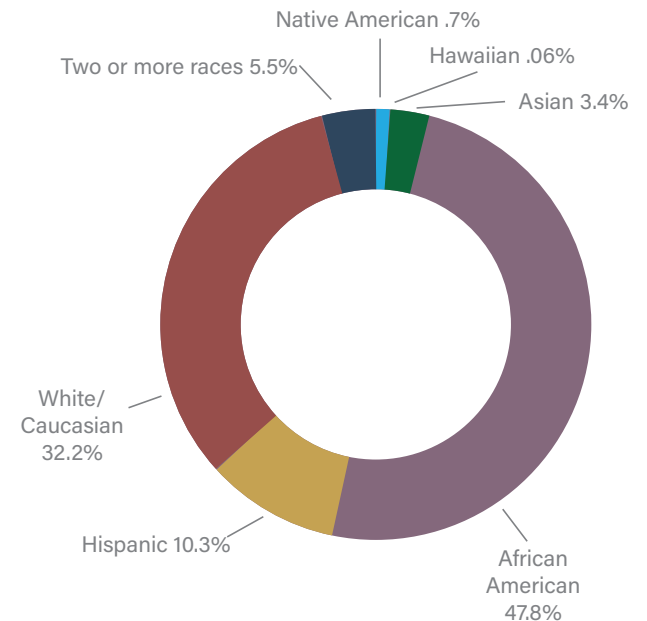
Michigan law requires all public charter school educators to be certified, and all students to be assessed annually.⁷

Charter School Funding

Public charter schools receive state funding through a per-pupil allowance. Michigan law stipulates this amount cannot exceed that received by the local school district where the public charter school is geographically located.⁸

Unlike their traditional counterparts, public charter schools receive no state funding for facilities and cannot leverage local bond and millage funding for their buildings. On average, Michigan public charter schools are 32% more cost-effective than the average conventional public school in the same city.⁹

Student Race/Ethnicity¹⁰



Specialty Schools and Curriculum

- A World in Motion STEM
- Advanced Learning
- African-Centered
- Arabic Language and ESL
- Aviation
- Business & Technology
- Classical Education

- College Preparatory
- Credit Recovery
- Early/Middle College
- Environmental Science
- Fine & Performing Arts
- Finnish Model
- Food, Agriculture, Renewable Resources, and Environment
- Gifted & Talented

- Homeless Students
- International Baccalaureat
- Language Immersion
- Leadership Emphasis
- Math and Science
- Media Arts
- Montessori
- Moral Focus
- Native American Language & Culture

- Pregnant/Parenting Teens
- Project-Based
- Public Safety
- Self-Paced
- Special Education
- STEM/STEAM
- Strict Discipline
- Trades and Career & Technical Education
- Virtual/Cyber

By the Numbers

295 Public Charter School Districts (373 Buildings)

6 School Openings Fall 2022

13 School Closings Spring 2023

149 Buildings with High School Grades (9-12)

40% of Buildings are High Schools, compared to 32% for non-charter¹¹

11,329 Teachers (sector wide)

27,464 Staff (includes teachers)

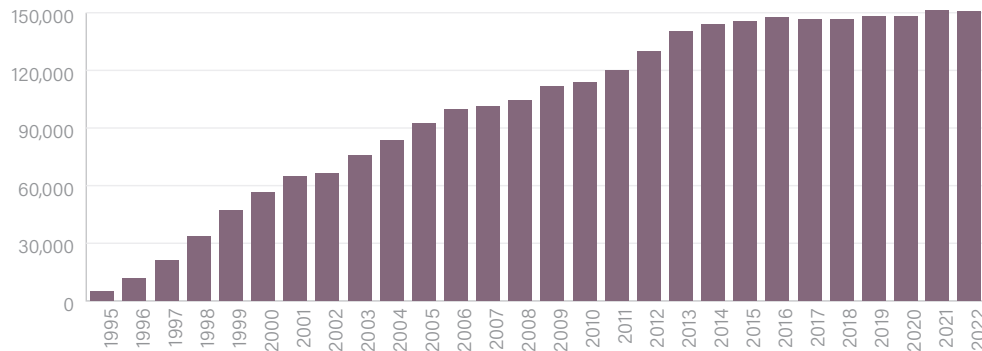
150,517 Students (approximately 10.8% of total statewide public K-12 enrollment)¹²

79% Free and Reduced Lunch,¹³ compared to statewide 53% and non-charter 50%

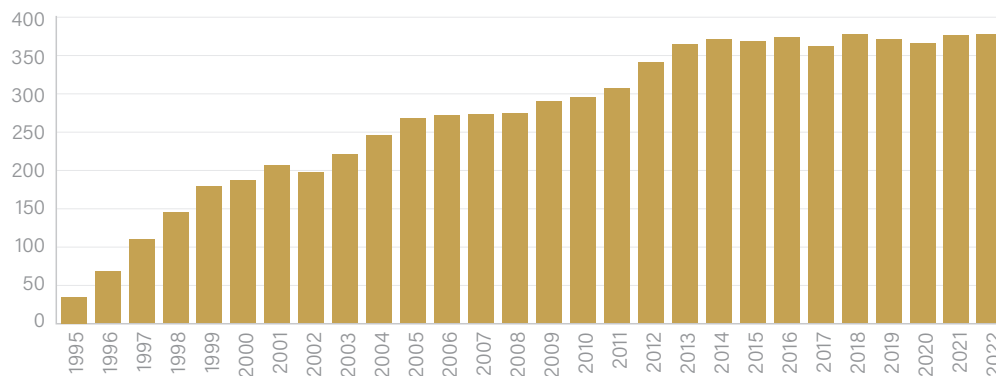
11% English Language Learners,¹⁴ compared to statewide 7% and non-charter 6%

11% Special Education,¹⁵ compared to statewide 13% and non-charter 14%

.01% Enrollment decrease from Previous Year



Enrollment history



Public charter school growth

CITATIONS

- ¹Center for Research on Education Outcomes, Stanford University. "As a Matter of Fact: The National Charter School Study III." 2023.
- ²Michigan Association of Public School Academies, press release: "U.S. News Rankings: Once again, top open-enrollment schools in Detroit are all charter schools." May 6, 2022.
- ³Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Index System.
- ⁴Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Enrollment Counts, Economically Disadvantaged.
- ⁵National Charter Schools Institute, Epicenter Reports.
- ⁶Michigan Department of Education, "Michigan Charter Schools - Questions and Answers." November, 2017.
- ⁷Michigan Department of Education, "Michigan Charter Schools - Questions and Answers." November, 2017.
- ⁸1979 PA 94, as amended, Article 2 §388.1620(6).
- ⁹DeAngelis, Cory and Ben DeGrow, "Doing More with Less: The Charter School Advantage in Michigan." Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 2018.
- ¹⁰Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Enrollment Counts, Race/Ethnicity.
- ¹¹Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, Educational Entity Master for 2022-23.
- ¹²Michigan Department of Education Bulletin 1014.
- ¹³Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Enrollment Counts, Economically Disadvantaged.
- ¹⁴Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Enrollment Counts, English Learners.
- ¹⁵Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information, MI School Data, School Enrollment Counts, Students with Disabilities.





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www.michiganauthorizers.com